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EDITORIAL

THE GREAT PRETENDER

Year One of the Bush era has been distinguished by nothing so much as a complete absence of distinction. The single successful initiative the Administration has pursued is the umpteen-billion-dollar, open-ended bailout of the savings and loan industry, perhaps the most devastating example of economic injustice since the McKinley era. Elsewhere—everywhere—Bush flounders and drifts with the prevailing Reaganite winds from his electoral base and from the neoliberal currents in Congress. It's not just his dumb quest for the "vision thing." The man has no moral center.

Hypocrisy is the hallmark of his public presentation. Bush's men plotted the coup against General Noriega and then Bush lied about his role, even after it was exposed—just as he has lied and covered up for years about his involvement in the Iran/*contra* crimes. He promised a sharp break with China in the wake of the unconscionable repression in June; by December he had broken his word and was suing for peace. He advocates self-determination for Eastern Europeans but not for Palestinians. He uses Costa Rican President Arias when it suits his purposes then pointedly refuses to abide by Arias's peace plan for Central America. He would "link" a settlement with the Russians to their aid to Nicaragua but not to U.S. aid to rebels in Angola, Afghanistan, Cambodia and who knows where else the C.I.A. is "resupplying."

Bush promised a kinder, gentler country. He delivered vetoes and threats—to poor women with unwanted pregnancies, workers struggling at a sub-poverty-level minimum wage, and a middle class that will pay indirectly for his capital gains gift to the rich. He wanted to be, simultaneously, the education, environmental and antidrug President. We see now that he was just pretending.

FIGHTING DRUGS WITH THE MILITARY
Michael T. Klare

DOLLARS FOR NEOCON SCHOLARS
Jon Wiener

WHITE HOUSE DIARY
Douglas McGrath

THE 'NATION'-'NEW REPUBLIC' MERGER
Victor Navasky

ARCHITECTURE IN THE AGE OF EXCESS
Jane Holtz Kay

THE OTHER *INTIFADA*

THE CRUCIAL ECONOMIC WAR HEATS UP

KATE ROUHANA

As the Palestinian uprising enters its third year, Israel's response to the continuing mass protests has grown more violent. Soldiers have been authorized to open fire on Palestinians practically at will—for actions such as wearing a mask, not heeding a command to halt, holding a flag in a demonstration or writing graffiti. More than 800 Palestinians have been killed so far; one out of four were 16 or under. An estimated 75,000 have sustained injuries serious enough to require treatment, and more than 7,000 have been held for six months or longer without charge under administrative detention. Yet the *intifada* continues.

Alongside this war in and for the streets, Israeli authorities and Palestinian activists have been engaged in a fierce battle over who will control the daily economic affairs of Palestinians living in the occupied territories. While the economic front has received less attention in the media than the political rebellion, it is the arena in which many, including the Israeli Defense Ministry, believe the war will be won or lost. Israeli officials have often said that economic hardship is the only thing that will ultimately break the uprising. The Israeli public has expressed amazement that the *intifada* has not collapsed already, especially since the Palestinian economy received severe blows from other quarters as well—a frost wiped out the winter crops, a heat wave damaged the summer crops and the Jordanian dinar, the currency used in the West Bank, has plummeted to half its original value. So

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LETTERS.

MACHO-ISM?

Charlottesville, Va.

It's impossible to make clear in a letter all the ways Thomas M. Disch has misrepresented *God Hunger* ["The Rhyme Scheme," Nov. 27], but I would like to reply to the way he has misrepresented me. Here's his concluding characterization: "In pop music there is Bon Jovi and Guns n' Roses; in the movies there's Chuck Norris and Sean Penn; in poetry there is Michael Ryan, and doubtless many more."

One of the subjects of my poems is growing up male in America and how it has affected me. Macho-ism I personally regard as a neurosis fostered by a culture that casts human experience in terms of power and dominance, an impoverishment of life for the man who suffers from it and a source of great harm for women and children and other men who are subjected to it. Since this is my belief, I expect it's also the belief expressed in my book, but that's for those James Wright called "intelligent readers of good will" to decide. *Michael Ryan*

DISCH REPLIES

New York City

I think Michael Ryan has missed the point of my catalogue of his compères. It is not just machismo, or even false machismo, that unites Bon Jovi, Guns n' Roses, Chuck Norris and Sean Penn but a common tone of surly and/or snarling righteousness and a whiny *amour-propre*, a tone that seems intrinsic in their characters rather than the calculated effect of art. It is a tone that only those who share it can mistake for music.

Thomas M. Disch

AMORAL EQUIVALENCE

Chicago

The issue of *The Nation* containing Amos Kenan's offensive article "The Four Decades of Blood Vengeance" [Feb. 6, 1989] arrived several months late at my post office. At the time I was a Fulbright professor at Al-Ba'ath University in Homs, Syria. Finding the amoral falsification of the tragedy of Lydda intolerable, I wrote to George Habash, sending him Kenan's piece and asking if he wished to reply. Instead he asked that I meet him in Damascus so he could thank me for my concern and recount his memory of Lydda in case *I* wished to reply.

Kenan extends the guilt of the rapist to his victim, offering his "dirty" hand to the hand of Habash which he presumes to be equally soiled. "We didn't conquer Lydda. Lydda, to put it simply, fled," Kenan claims. He claims further that the city was empty, that the armored column led by Moshe Dayan killed only livestock, yet he admits with incredible effrontery that he and his comrades raped Palestinian women in the prison compounds when they "couldn't take it anymore." Habash walked from Lydda over the mountains and deserts to Amman from the prison compounds with his mother and the six children of his sister, who had died of typhoid while Lydda was under siege.

Kenan appeals to Habash, on grounds that their positions *might* have been reversed, that they both shake hands and die ignominious deaths to atone for lives lived unheroically. My message to Kenan is "speak for yourself, Amos." When we met, Habash told me his account of the tragedy at Lydda.

"My own memories of Lydda completely contradict Kenan's lies. In the spring of 1948 I was finishing my second year of medical school at the American University of Beirut. I had planned to return to Jaffa as soon as the semester ended. My family had been living in Jaffa for some time, although we were originally from Lydda. However, my mother wrote to me in early June advising me to remain in Beirut because the Zionist assault had begun, and she was concerned for my safety.

"I was determined to join my family and prepared immediately to travel south. I learned that Jaffa had fallen and that my family had gone to Lydda. Already the Israelis controlled the entire northern region of Palestine, which made travel through Naqura on the coastal road impossible. Therefore I made my way to Amman and crossed the bridge. As I approached Lydda I learned that the city was under heavy aerial bombardment and was in the initial stages of siege.

"Upon reaching Lydda I found my sister seriously ill with typhoid. She was my eldest sister, married, with six children. The curfew made it impossible to obtain medicine or even to move about. I found the clinic, which had been moved to what had been the hospital and was now barely a clinic. Nevertheless I felt obliged to stay there to take care of patients, because no doctors remained in the city to treat the sick and the wounded.

"Someone managed to get to the clinic to tell me that my sister was dead. I had to go to her home, which was some distance from the clinic. Outside I saw terrible sights: Dozens of bodies lay in pools of blood, old and young had been shot. Among the dead I recognized one elderly man, a neighbor who had a small falafel shop and who had never carried a gun. The Israelis were killing defenseless, unarmed people indiscriminately.

"When I reached my sister's house I found that they had already buried her body. Almost at once the shouting and gunfire arrived at our neighborhood. My mother and the small children of my sister were very frightened. Everyone was ordered out of the house. Israeli soldiers banged at the door shouting, 'Get out! Go to King Abdullah!'

"We were herded like animals, rounded up and searched. You can't imagine the savagery with which people were treated. Everything was taken—watches, jewelry, wedding rings, wallets, gold. One young neighbor of ours, a man in his late 20s, not more, Amin Hanhan, had secreted some money in his shirt to care for his family on the journey. The soldier who searched him demanded that he surrender the money, and he resisted. He was shot dead in front of us. One of his sisters, a young married woman, also a neighbor of our family, was present. She saw her brother shot dead before her eyes. She was so shocked that, as we made our way toward the village of Bir Zeit, she died of shock, exposure and lack of water."

Habash added, "It should be recorded that the aerial bombardment of Lydda four or five days before the ground attack, a sustained air strike by Israeli planes, was intended to create terror among the people and to make them flee Lydda, which was known to be a strong fortress of resistance to Zionism."

Habash's gaze is level, dignified, penetrating, gracious, his presence at once unpretentious and imposing. A handsome man, he uses a cane now. His people call him Al-Hakim ("the wise"). When our time was up and I had to leave, he offered me his hand. "My hand," he said smiling, "is not dirty. I am a patriot fighting in a just cause, for my people and for Palestine."

A. Clare Brandabur

KENAN REPLIES

New York City

I don't know if A. Clare Brandabur's letter is more stupid than disgusting, or vice versa. My piece was written with compassion, not hatred.

In my country I was among the first, some decades ago, to establish relations with the P.L.O. to talk peace with the Palestinians on the basis of mutual recognition of legitimate rights. I met publicly and still meet with P.L.O. representatives, a crime punishable by imprisonment in my country. I am also being indicted for contempt of court on this very subject. I don't need preaching from a groupie, male or female.

George Habash may be a handsome man leaning on a cane, but he is not the director of a pets' clinic. He is the leader of an organization that did some killing. Most conflicts have two sides, not just one. The Israeli-Palestinian is such a conflict.

Habash himself voted for peace with Israel. Let zealous frustrated groupies not stand in the way of peace. *Amos Kenan*

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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EDITORIALS.

A Will to Lose

The joke has it that if Eastern Airlines had somehow been renamed Eastern Europe by the bankruptcy court, George Bush would have supported the bill calling for mediation of the ten-month strike. After Bush vetoed the bill on November 21, however, the pilots and flight attendants unions ended their sympathy strike with the International Association of Machinists. While the machinists will continue fighting Frank Lorenzo, the unique display of solidarity among these diverse and often conflicting groups of workers is over.

This development brings with it more than the specter of one more lost strike. It closes the door on a critical opportunity for labor to have reversed a decade of retreat and redeem the shame of PATCO. It also reveals the persistence of strategic myopia, tactical timidity and Mickey Mouse machismo in the upper circles of American unionism.

When the Eastern strike began in March, a chorus of top labor officials declared it a turning point in labor's fortunes. Turning points, of course, are dramatic moments, and the machinists promised a stormy opening scene when they threatened to close down East Coast commuter rail transport. But before the curtain could rise a clever judge ruled that though the machinists could picket, the rail workers could not honor the lines. The ruling violated the intention of the Railway Labor Act and was certainly open to challenge

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by defiance, particularly if the A.F.L.-C.I.O. had lived up to its heroic pronouncements. But the unions backed off.

Secondary picketing at other airlines was rejected by the machinists' leadership and discouraged by the A.F.L.-C.I.O. Civil disobedience actions, such as those organized by Jobs for Justice, in which caravans of workers drove through airports blocking traffic, were stopped. A call late in the summer from the Eastern pilots for an industrywide "suspension of services" was squelched by Air Line Pilots Association president Henry Duffy, although 75 percent of ALPA's members were in bargaining at the time.

Even as Lorenzo rebuilt his operation with scabs, inaction ruled. Often the excuse was that serious disruptions of service would alienate "the public." But the flying public was never a base of support for the strike, and the working-class public was presumed passive. Soon, all "publics" ceased to notice the strike. It had become conventional. The press, which initially gave the strike a high profile, returned only occasionally to report on the parade of acquisition artists seeking a bargain-basement airline.

The machinists took their strategic cues from this same parade and at times joined it. They seemed to have no objective other than seeking a new employer. The strike had its origins in resistance to the huge wage cuts Lorenzo demanded of the machinists, but that goal was lost as the union offered ever greater wage and contract concessions to the likes of Peter Ueberroth, who gouged the pilots at Transamerica in 1984-85, and Carl Icahn, who attacked the T.W.A. flight attendants in 1986.

The machinists' dependence on the lowlifes of high finance was matched by that of the pilots on another of the nation's major seats of impropriety, Congress. ALPA put its faith in Congress's ability to face down Bush (on a labor issue, at that) and produce a fair settlement of the dispute. But like the financiers and corporate raiders courted by the machinists, Congress was a force beyond union control.

The one leadership group willing to experiment was that of the flight attendants union, Transport Workers Local 553. They hired Ray Rogers to help organize a corporate campaign. They conducted mass "walk-throughs" in airports, aggressive community outreach and attacks on some of Lorenzo's financial partners. When they proposed a solidarity caravan from Miami to New York the leaders of ALPA and of the machinists rebuffed them and organized their own.

The flight attendants have never been taken seriously by the manly leaders of the industry's other unions. The perpetuation of sexism in this strike was all the more outrageous because the flight attendants had the most to lose from joining the strike. They alone received no strike benefits and had to beg from an emergency fund set up by the A.F.L.-C.I.O. Their own International contributed a mere $25,000 to Local 553 during the strike—70 cents a month per striker. Unlike the replaced Eastern pilots, whose skills are in great demand, most of the flight attendants will probably have to seek jobs in the low-wage service sector.

To their credit, many rank-and-file pilots and machinists did not follow the example of their leaders. Some joined Local 553's actions; many more chose solidarity over sexism. Of the pilots and flight attendants, the vast majority stood their ground and might have stood it longer if a clear objective had been enunciated and the means to achieve it spelled out. But the will of the strikers was squandered by leaders with a will to lose. Regardless of the outcome of the machinists' continuing strike, the chance to make Eastern a turning point has passed. Lorenzo, like the perpetrators of PATCO's defeat, remains at large, and hardball is still a gentlemen's game in business circles. The lost opportunity at Eastern is more than a failure of nerve by a handful of leaders; it is a grim reminder that serious renovations are needed in the house of labor.

COMING UP

John Cavanagh and Robin Broad on the Philippines

Fidel Holds Fast

Of all the hundreds of speeches that Fidel Castro has delivered over the past thirty-one years, few have been of such singular interest as his funeral oration on December 7 for the 2,289 Cubans (the number is now official) killed in Angola and other wars.

The speech has provoked a torrent of commentary, most of which can be summed up in the *New York Times* view of Castro as a "Fossil Marxist," to be lumped together with Kim Il Sung, Nicolae Ceausescu and whoever runs Albania these days. Certainly what resonates in the speech is the depth of Castro's contempt for what is happening in Eastern Europe. On the surface the tone is reminiscent of Erich Honecker's fortieth-anniversary speech. That was the one that likened East German Communism to "the steadily turning sails of a windmill," against which the imperialist enemy would dash itself like Don Quixote.

Well, we all know what happened to Erich Honecker. By the time of the Havana speech, the East German gerontocrat was already gone. So were Todor Zhivkov and Milos Jakes and their whole wretched crew. But Castro isn't Honecker. To Castro, the main lesson to be drawn from this seems to have been that Honecker underestimated the enemy. The crisis in the socialist bloc, Castro explained, was the result of a long-term imperialist strategy of undermining socialism from within, compounded by "some errors that may have been committed" (a nice use of the Spanish passive subjunctive, which leaves open the question of culpability).

But Castro is also different from Honecker in more significant ways. As a Latin American, he devoted an important part of his speech to a passionate denunciation of the conditions in which the countries of the Third World are submerged. Miami-style capitalism is regarded by Castro, with considerable justification, as a moral cesspool. It is also founded, he believes, on the sustained rape of the South, with only the forms of exploitation shifting, from the

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conquistadores through slavery to the more gentlemanly, remote-controlled carnage by the I.M.F. It is impossible not to sympathize with that portion of his speech. And without it, there is no way of grasping the vehemence of his rejectionism and his sense of isolation. Leonid Brezhnev, wicked old scoundrel though he was, at least behaved as if the Third World mattered, even if he was keener to ply it with guns than with butter. Mikhail Gorbachev has his mind on other things.

If there is a consensus in Moscow on anything these days, it is that states like Cuba are a tiresome drain on Soviet resources. Castro's speech was quite candid about why he decided, in August, to ban the Soviet magazines *Sputnik* and *Moscow News*: because they had carried stories that proposed revising the terms of Soviet-Cuban trade. Soviet friendship is worth $5 billion a year to Cuba. To some this is an artificial subsidy; to the Cubans it is an equitable alternative to the blind laws of the market. For Castro, the Malta summit was an act of superpower collusion that will make Moscow a junior partner in the pillage of the Third World.

Since the 1960s, Cuba's revolutionary order has been built on the assumption of a fixed compass in the Soviet bloc. The instruments that Brezhnev's Kremlin gave Cuba to defend itself were a massive security apparatus, a command economy and a neo-Stalinist political model. But the world has changed, and that model now shows signs of strain in Cuba as well as in Eastern Europe, and for much the same reasons.

The island was shaken last summer by its most serious political crisis in years. Four officials were executed for corruption, including Gen. Arnaldo Ochoa, a Hero of the Republic (there are only five). The powerful Minister of the Interior, Gen. José Abrantes, got twenty years in jail for abuse of power. A secret department of the Interior Ministry, set up to evade the U.S. economic embargo, was found to have been used for drug trafficking. And a number of senior officials were purged amid tales of wild parties, sex with teenage girls and general "dissipation."

But in Cuba, only the party will judge the party. "Without a strong, disciplined and respected party, it is impossible to develop a truly socialist revolution," Castro said in Havana. "It is not possible to carry out such a process by insulting socialism, destroying its values, discrediting the party, demoralizing the vanguard, renouncing its leading role." Of course, party power in Eastern Europe was implanted by the Red Army; the legitimacy of the Cuban Revolution is much greater. Yet Castro's remarks go well beyond a comment on Cuba's particular situation; they are a general defense of the most problematic aspects of Marxist-Leninist dogma.

More than twenty years ago, Czechoslovak intellectuals of the Prague Spring welcomed Cuba for its freshness. After Che Guevara's death in Bolivia, the screenwriter Jiri Mucha wrote, "Without men like Che, there would be no more hope left." Castro supported Alexander Dubcek on the principle of independence, if not on matters of substance, and swallowed the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia as a bitter medicine. Today, the most depressing comment on the blind alley in which cold war history has stranded Cuba is that Fidel Castro should look at figures of the stature of Christa Wolf or Vaclav Havel and see them as nothing more than the vulgar agents of a counterrevolutionary conspiracy.

GEORGE BLACK

Sacred Land

Not far from Tuba City, on the Navajo Indian Reservation in northern Arizona, a sign along the highway advertises a fossilized dinosaur track. Faintly embedded in the Mesozoic rock are the 200-million-year-old tracks of a large biped dinosaur with a seven-foot stride, whose short forearms were suitable only for grasping the remains of whatever it had been chasing. The landscape in the distance reveals a panorama of colorful canyons and mesas. The haze floating on the horizon blends the pastel shades of peach, pink and red with a distant blue-green mantle of desert vegetation and a gray, overcast sky.

The link between this ancient land and the Navajo people who inhabit it is at the heart of a lawsuit that was dismissed last month by a Federal judge in Phoenix, Arizona. The suit was filed by the Big Mountain Legal Office on behalf of traditional Navajos who are resisting the government's forced program of relocation. The suit was their last hope to stop the relocation, and now their removal from the land is imminent.

The program was instituted in 1974 after a joint use area long shared by the Navajo and Hopi tribes was partitioned and Navajos living on the wrong side of the fence were ordered to move [see Trebbe Johnson, "Indian Land, White Greed," July 4/11, 1987]. The judge overruled an injunction against the relocation and dismissed the suit, rejecting the Navajos' argument that living on that land is integral to the practice of their traditional religion and that moving would prohibit the free exercise of religion guaranteed by the First Amendment.

Many of the Navajos' traditional religious ceremonies are based on relationships to specific places. These ceremonies require regular, sometimes daily, access to sacred locations and could not be performed on the new lands offered by the government.

Navajos who continue to resist relocation are forced to live in substandard housing as a result of a government order forbidding any new construction or repair work on Navajo dwellings on Hopi land. As many as three generations of a family are often crammed into a ramshackle two-bedroom house.

Large, government-ordered reductions in their sheep herds have also had a devastating impact on the Navajos trying to maintain their traditional way of life. Those resisting relocation have barely enough sheep to feed themselves and cannot afford to trade their livestock for a healing ceremony, which can cost as much as $300. They are forced to live in poverty until they submit to the government.

The Navajo emergence myth tells about the creation of man in the Fifth World by Changing Woman, born of darkness and dawn, after her sons, the Twin Hero Gods, rid the world of dangerous monsters that were introduced from a

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lower world by flooding waters. When the Navajos emerged into the Fifth World, they found a land bounded in four directions by four sacred mountains.

For the traditional Navajo, the importance of the land between the four sacred mountains cannot be underestimated. The land and the people are inseparably linked. The land forms the physical, spiritual and social structure of the Navajo universe. It is their only point of reference and, as such, defines their identity as a people. If they are removed from the land, they will lose this point of reference, and their universe will collapse. "In our traditional tongue there is no word for relocation," says Pauline Whitesinger, one of the Navajos who are resisting relocation. "To move away means to disappear and never be seen again."

NICHOLAS HENTOFF

Nicholas Hentoff is a Phoenix-based attorney and freelance journalist who has written on Native American issues for The Washington Post, The New York Times *and* The Wall Street Journal.

UNCIVIL LIBERTIES.

CALVIN TRILLIN

I ran into a friend of mine who told me that everything that has been happening in Eastern Europe is part of a setup. He said that the Communists are faking it in order to lull us into a false sense of security. And what happens when we're safely lulled? Then, he said, whammo!

I've grown accustomed to hearing him say this sort of thing. Years ago, Russia and China appeared to have fallen into a geopolitical version of what the old gossip columnist Walter Winchell used to call the don't-invitums, a phrase Winchell reserved for people so angry that they couldn't be asked to the same party, but my friend told me that the Russians and the Chinese were faking it. This was when Russian soldiers and Chinese soldiers were occasionally trading potshots along the border, and Mao and Khrushchev seemed to be trying to think of the nastiest things they could say about each other. Mao, for instance, said that Khrushchev was in a "revisionist quagmire."

I figured that one really got to Khrushchev. I could imagine Khrushchev just wincing when he read that "revisionist quagmire" line in the newspaper. I could see Khrushchev's beady little eyes misting over as he put down the paper and said something like "that Mao really knows how to hurt a guy."

My friend—I'll call him Harvey—didn't see it that way at all. "Believe me," he said when I commented on the zingers old Mao was sending Khrushchev's way, "it's a setup."

"How can you tell?" I asked. "It seems to me when you're in an argument with somebody and you get so mad that you say he's in a revisionist quagmire, there's really no going back. You can try to make up, but every time the guy looks at you, for the rest of his life, he's going to remember that you accused him of standing knee-deep in all that ooze."

"It's part of their plan," Harvey assured me. "Don't be taken in."

Harvey would describe himself as a fervent anti-Communist—he is always telling me how wicked the Communists are—but there is probably nobody in the world who has more faith in the limitless ingenuity of Communist rulers. Harvey has always thought that just about everything is part of their plan.

"If these guys who run Russia are so smart," I've been saying to Harvey for years, "how come everyone has to stand in line for soap over there?"

"Because Communism is not only wicked but unworkable," Harvey would say.

"Well good," I'd say. "Then we don't have to worry so much about it."

"That's what they want you to think when you read about the lines for soap," Harvey would say. "Don't be taken in by that. It's all part of their plan."

"You mean they want everyone to be dirty?" I'd say. "I don't see how that could serve their purposes."

"Just wait," Harvey said.

So I waited. So did the people in the soap line. I was a lot better off than they were, of course, because I could do my waiting inside. Sometimes I would think about those people standing in line in Russia. I would think about what they might say if they knew about Harvey's believing that the line they were standing in was all part of a plan. It might cheer them up. "Guess what?" one of the people in line would say, as he stamped his feet and clapped his hands together in an effort to keep warm. "The bozos who run this country are too dumb to make soap and there's a guy in New Jersey who thinks that's very clever of them."

So I'm used to Harvey. Still, I have to say that I was surprised to hear him say that even the recent changes in Eastern Europe were part of their plan.

"But the East German Parliament voted to end the special role of the Communist Party," I reminded him. "There were nearly a million people in the square in Prague shouting for the Communist government to resign."

"They've always been good at getting out crowds," he said. "Did you notice all those people were chanting the same thing and holding the same flags? Staged. Believe me."

"And Poland?" I asked. "Where they had to give up power? Is that part of their plan?"

Harvey nodded.

"Harvey," I said, "maybe all of this is part of their plan, but it's not a very good plan. Maybe they made the mistake of putting the guy who was in charge of soap distribution in charge of the plan."

Harvey considered that possibility for a while. Then he said, "That's what they want you to think. Don't be taken in."

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

A large but stupid-looking man presents himself for employment at a lumber camp in Alaska. Has he, asks the foreman, any previous experience at lumberjacking? Yes, responds the man assertively, he has been a lumberjack in the Sahara. But there are no trees in the Sahara, objects the foreman. This, replies the large man in a belligerent tone, only shows what an excellent lumberjack he is.

The lumberjack's claim is known to logicians as an unfalsifiable proposition. And, as Karl Popper was fond of saying, unfalsifiability is an index of the weakness of an argument. You can see the low candlepower of conservative reasoning being demonstrated in just this way at the present moment. There are now as many Moscow-backed Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe as there are pines in the Sahara. Who gets the credit for this? Why, *we* do. We of the peace-through-strength faction. We of the Star Wars "initiative" and the new generation of nuclear weaponry. We alone did it. The course of history, as has long been known, is a working-out in practice of the proposition that America is Number One. Anyone who doubts this is probably an agent or at least a dupe of the Kremlin—hang on, that one seems to be losing its potency.

Try a counterexample. Suppose that instead of being dead wrong about Gorbachev at the beginning the conservatives had been dead right. Put the case that he had been a closet hard-liner after all. Suppose that with a few cosmetic changes he had hung on in Afghanistan, upheld the physical division of Germany, kept the leash on domestic free expression. What would the right wing be saying? They would be saying exactly what they are saying now, about how necessary it was to have had massive rearmament and the Reagan doctrine. An argument that can be used to prove anything is open to the objection that it proves nothing.

Now look at the same argument in miniature. On October 23, Eduard Shevardnadze announced that the radar station at Krasnoyarsk was indeed a violation of the ABM Treaty. He was quite correct in saying so. But those who rushed to say that this admission retrospectively vindicated the Committee on the Present Danger were incorrect. Krasnoyarsk became an issue in the first place because American hawks themselves wanted not so much to tamper with the ABM Treaty as to tear it up altogether. If they had had their way, broken out of the treaty and embarked upon a Star Wars megabudget, does anyone believe that Shevardnadze would have made this concession? The relationship between Soviet dovishness and American hawkishness is, in other words, the exact opposite of what is boastfully claimed.

In his forthcoming book on *glasnost* and *perestroika*, Andrei Sakharov recounts meetings he had with Reagan and Bush. He tried to persuade Reagan that S.D.I. would be destabilizing, and he tried to convince Bush that the United States should repudiate first use of nuclear weapons. According to Sakharov: "I think that Reagan somehow tuned out my arguments and kept repeating what he always said—that the Strategic Defense Initiative will make the world a safer place." (I think I can picture the scene.) Sakharov's account of his meeting with Bush, which took place just after the latter became President, is equally revealing: "I talked to him about the importance of the United States agreeing to the doctrine of refusing to make the first strike. The Soviet Union would then confirm its own previous first-strike refusal in a legal and constitutional manner. . . . Bush said nothing." Since Sakharov pioneered the Soviet nuclear capacity, and since he is now the moral leader of the legal and official Soviet parliamentary opposition, I think his insight on the relationship between reform and détente has more ethical and logical weight than the quick take on the subject now being offered by, say, Dan Quayle.

Although the arms race and the cold war started at about the same time, they have never run in sync. The United States has generally been the initiator in the arms race, while the Soviet Union, through the original sin of the Stalinization of Eastern Europe, was the gravest offender in beginning the cold war. But it is difficult to think of any episode of de-Stalinization that owes anything to militarism on this side of the Atlantic. Did the Kennedy-McNamara nuclear roulette over Cuba help Khrushchev to de-Stalinize, or did it help Brezhnev to overthrow Khrushchev? Did Johnson's invasions of Vietnam and the Dominican Republic bring Dubcek to power in Czechoslovakia, or did they make it easier for Brezhnev to depose him? If anything, the process of unfreezing Eastern Europe has been retarded by the sound and fury of American imperialism, just as it was retarded by Washington's earlier habit of bringing ex-Nazis into the C.I.A. for the fantasy of "rollback."

If there was one hinge moment for reformism in the period when Gorbachev was consolidating himself, it came with the near-meltdown at Chernobyl. The accident convinced a strategic majority of the Soviet establishment, first, that the system was in need of major overhaul (*perestroika*) and, second, that this would require the enlistment of unpredictable democratic minds and forces (*glasnost*). So as far as change from above went, the crucial element was supplied *sui generis*, as it were, and by way of a confrontation with nuclear reality rather than with Edward Teller's nuclear ravings. When it comes to change from below, in Prague and Berlin and Warsaw, the credit belongs to the hardy and unconquerable opposition forces—ranging from neo-Marxists to prewar nationalists but including very few hard rightists—who have been writing and fighting for a generation. How conceited of the U.S. military-industrial complex, and its domesticated intellectuals, to try to annex the credit that belongs to courageous dissent.

Santayana, wearisomely quoted, was wrong in believing that those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it. History does not, in fact, repeat itself (though historians repeat one another). However, those who are determined not to learn from the present may well be interested in repeating the crimes and mistakes of the past: a lowering thought with which to enter the 1990s, and a wretched trivialization of a great human and political drama.

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ARTICLES.

SCENARIO FOR A QUAGMIRE

Fighting Drugs With the Military

MICHAEL T. KLARE

Slowly but surely the U.S. armed forces are edging to the brink of full-scale military involvement in the Latin American drug wars. With the mounting pressure on President Bush to "do something" against the illegal drug trade, it is only a matter of time before U.S. soldiers will be sent into combat against Latin American cocaine traffickers and their armed protectors. While such action would undoubtedly start out as a limited, small-scale operation, it is highly unlikely that such a piecemeal effort would make a significant dent in the drug trade. Thus demands will increase for larger and more aggressive military ventures—a process that could lead, as in Vietnam, to a major U.S. military commitment.

The first step in this process occurred on September 18, when Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney issued a directive to all U.S. military commanders, ordering them to develop plans for a major campaign against illegal drug trafficking. "Detecting and countering the production and trafficking of illegal drugs is a high priority national security mission," Cheney declared.

In support of its antinarcotics mission, the Defense Department has already assumed significant responsibility for the monitoring of air and sea traffic into the southern United States and for the interception of illegal narcotics at the borders. These border interdiction efforts will be supplemented by intensified military operations aimed at the growing and processing countries themselves. "The Department of Defense will assist in the attack on production of illegal drugs *at the source*," Cheney affirmed in the guidelines issued to commanders. [Emphasis added.]

When asked if U.S. military personnel will be ordered to engage in direct combat against Latin American drug traffickers, Cheney and other Administration officials have repeatedly said no—while nevertheless leaving the door open for such action in the future. "I would say that we should not absolutely rule it off the table," William Bennett, the nation's antidrug chieftain, observed on September 8. "A sovereign government shouldn't do that." As evidence of a growing U.S. commitment to military action, in November the Navy announced that beginning in 1990 it will deploy permanently an aircraft carrier battle group off the coast of Colombia.

Michael T. Klare, the Five College Associate Professor of Peace and World Security Studies, based at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts, is defense correspondent for The Nation.

This is not to suggest that the U.S. military is itching for a fight. In fact, most senior officers recoil at the prospect of "another Vietnam" in the Andean jungles—an analogy that is often made in the military press. Not, of course, that we're likely to see 550,000 U.S. soldiers in South America. Still, there are important similarities. The "enemy" in Latin America, like that confronted in South Vietnam, constitutes a well-entrenched underground that cannot be easily distinguished from the urban poor and rural peasantry, and, as in Saigon, key government agencies in the drug-producing Andean countries are hopelessly corrupt, or have been compromised by enemy penetration.

Perhaps the greatest similarity to the Vietnam War is the impressive capacity of opposition forces to resist or evade government attack, even in those cases where U.S. personnel provide the tactical leadership. The power and resilience of the drug syndicates are evident in the two principal U.S.-managed antidrug campaigns in South America, Operation Blast Furnace in Bolivia and Operation Snowcap in Bolivia and Peru.

Operation Blast Furnace involved the deployment of 170 U.S. military personnel and six UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters to the Chaparé region of Bolivia for a four-month period in 1986 to support raids against suspected cocaine laboratories by Bolivian antidrug forces (the Leopards) and agents of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (D.E.A.). The operation, hailed as a major U.S. initiative in the war against cocaine, produced a temporary decline in production but failed to net any significant suspects or supplies of cocaine. Michael Abbott, who commanded Army aviation personnel during the operation, wrote in 1988, "As soon as the U.S. military pulled out of Bolivia" the major traffickers came out of hiding and the price of coca leaves—the raw material for cocaine—"climbed to a level just short of its pre-Blast Furnace price."

Operation Snowcap was launched in 1988 to provide a permanent U.S. antidrug presence in the coca-growing regions of Bolivia and Peru. Like Blast Furnace, it entails U.S. support for helicopter strikes against drug laboratories by D.E.A. agents and host-nation forces. Snowcap also involves a training program for host-nation forces in counterinsurgency and small-unit tactics, provided by handpicked teams of U.S. Special Forces personnel. As of October 1989, there were approximately 100 U.S. civilians working in Peru and Bolivia under Snowcap, plus some fifty Green Beret training officers.

The Snowcap operations in Peru reveal the problems faced by Washington in attempting to suppress the drug traffic at the source. In the Upper Huallaga Valley, where the coca for an estimated 60 percent of the cocaine smuggled into the United States is grown, U.S. agents face not only the organized opposition of local farmers but also armed resistance by Sendero Luminoso ("Shining Path") guerrillas. In early 1989, Snowcap had to be suspended temporarily when Peruvian forces could no longer guarantee the safety of U.S. personnel. The operation was not resumed until

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September, following the construction of a fortified encampment at Santa Lucia.

Although U.S. officials report a steady increase in the number of drug laboratories destroyed and acres of coca eradicated under Snowcap, nobody really believes that the operation is making a significant dent in the cocaine trade. In 1988 Peruvian forces managed to eradicate 5,130 hectares of coca—a mere 4 percent of the 115,630 hectares reportedly under cultivation at that time. Many experts believe, moreover, that total coca cultivation in Peru has risen to 200,000 hectares, with more fields being added all the time. Meanwhile, the Sendero guerrillas have steadily increased their control over the coca-growing regions, forcing the Peruvian government to abandon its plans to spray these areas with herbicides out of fear that such action will drive the coca farmers into the arms of the guerrillas.

The obstacles faced by Snowcap operatives in Peru and Bolivia exist throughout the drug-producing areas of Latin America. Coca cultivation and cocaine processing have become an essential way of life for hundreds of thousands of poor farmers who cannot earn a decent living from any other crop. An estimated 300,000 Peruvians are directly involved in coca production, and many more subsist on related activities; in Bolivia the numbers are roughly comparable.

Given these conditions, U.S. efforts to mobilize host-nation forces in the struggle against drug cultivation will inevitably produce hostility and resistance from the peasants, thus threatening the stability of the very governments upon whose assistance Washington has come to rely. As suggested by the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress, U.S.-backed eradication campaigns "portend real economic and political dangers for the governments of nations with marginal economic growth."

To complicate the picture further, the Peruvian *campesinos*, attacked by government antinarcotics forces on one side and exploited by Colombian drug traffickers on the other, have turned to the Senderistas for protection. And, although fiercely puritanical themselves when it comes to alcohol and drug use, the Senderistas have accepted drug money for their protective services in the coca-growing areas. Having obtained ample armaments with their newly acquired narcotics income, and enjoying widespread support from the rural population, the Senderistas have become formidable opponents of the Peruvian authorities.

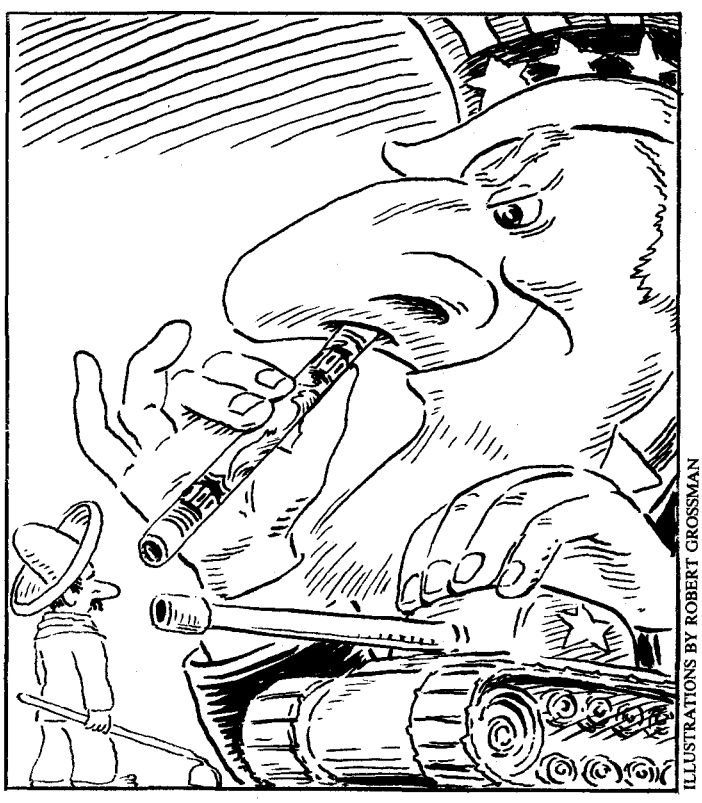
Ultimately, any major effort to suppress coca production in the Upper Huallaga Valley will require a full-scale counter-insurgency campaign of the sort attempted by the United States in Southeast Asia. And just as government forces in Vietnam proved incapable of sustaining such an arduous task on their own and eventually had to be buttressed by American troops, so it is likely that sustained counter-insurgency warfare in Peru will also exceed Lima's capabilities and thus invite full-scale U.S. military involvement.

An equally bleak outlook confronts U.S. antidrug officials in Colombia, the source of approximately 80 percent of the illicit cocaine now flowing into the United States. Drug trafficking brings an estimated $4 billion per year into the Colombian economy—about three times the amount generated by coffee exports, the leading legal crop—and as many as 1 million Colombians are directly involved in trafficking or benefit indirectly from the wealth acquired thereby. Moreover, the Colombian *narcotraficantes* have been able to corrupt important sectors of the military, the police and the judiciary and to win friends among the poor through conspicuous public works projects.

Issues of race and class also intrude into the Colombian narcotics picture. While Colombia's governing elite is made up largely of white entrepreneurs (many of whom are connected to the coffee industry), the drug syndicates are made up of poor blacks and mestizos from the slums of Medellín and Cali who feel no loyalty to the government in Bogotá. "With narcotics," says Medellín City Council member Mario Arango, "the mestizos, the mulattoes and blacks . . . have had the opportunities to enter consumer society and gain substantial wealth." It is no wonder, therefore, that the poor of Medellín have shown no enthusiasm for the current antidrug crackdown, and that no one has rushed forward with news of the whereabouts of the major traffickers sought by U.S. and Colombian authorities.

Given this assessment of the narco-battlefield in Latin America, it appears that the Bush Administration has two choices if it is determined to wage a war on drugs: It can change its basic approach to the drug problem by switching from a strategy aimed at choking off supplies to one aimed at reducing domestic demand, or it can assume increased responsibility for the antidrug military campaign in Latin America.

Focusing on the demand side would, in the view of many U.S. specialists, prove more effective over the long run, but



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT GROSSMAN

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would also require extensive Federal spending on drug education, treatment services and social welfare in inner-city neighborhoods—a price that Bush does not appear to be willing to pay. Instead, the Administration has chosen to emphasize a punitive approach, entailing increased arrest and imprisonment of traffickers in the United States and stepped-up military action against suppliers abroad. For this approach to make any progress, however, the war against growers (and peasants) will have to escalate—and since the capacity of the military in the cocaine-producing countries has pretty much been stretched to the limit, increased involvement by U.S. forces appears inevitable.

Such involvement, once approved, could take several forms: hit-and-run attacks by U.S. Rangers or Special Forces personnel against major drug laboratories and storage sites, participation (with host-nation forces) in periodic "search and destroy" missions aimed at crippling coca producton in such areas as the Chaparé or the Upper Huallaga Valley, full-scale counterinsurgency warfare against the Sendero Luminoso and drug-connected guerrilla groups in Colombia, and military assaults on the headquarters of the drug barons and their major allies (such as Gen. Manuel Noriega of Panama).

Major military action of this sort would undoubtedly damage the syndicates' supply operations in Latin America and possibly would demolish some of the major drug rings. It would be the height of folly, however, to assume that such operations will succeed in shutting off the supply of drugs to the United States. Contrary to the U.S. perception of a highly organized cartel that controls the drug trade from a central headquarters in Medellín—one that could be neutralized in a single military sweep—the syndicates are loosely tied criminal organizations that can subdivide, disperse and reunite in new and unpredictable formations. Moreover, the syndicates have already begun coca production in new areas, including remote stretches of Brazil, that are beyond the reach of U.S. forces. Thus, the United States could find itself bogged down in a bloody struggle with well-armed insurgents and their peasant supporters.

Given the risk of military entanglement in another jungle quagmire, many senior Pentagon officials have warned against the use of U.S. combat troops in Latin American drug wars. "Gringos must not shoot Latins," observed one general recently, warning that such action would precipitate an anti-U.S. backlash of tremendous proportions. Other officials have expressed unease at the Pentagon's assumption of what is seen as a law-enforcement function. "That is not the function of the military," Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci declared in 1988. "We are not the frontline agency in the war on drugs."

There are, however, contrary pressures acting on and within the military. Most prominent, of course, are the voices in Congress that are calling for more vigorous action from the Bush Administration. The Administration's anti-narcotics plan "is not tough enough, bold enough, or imaginative enough to meet the crisis at hand," proclaimed Joseph Biden, the Democratic leader of the Senate Judiciary Committee, on September 5. "The President says he wants to wage a war on drugs, but if that's true what we need is another D-Day, not another Vietnam, not a limited war, fought on the cheap, and destined for stalemate and human tragedy." Such language is being used with increasing fervor by Democrats on Capitol Hill, putting pressure on Bush to demonstrate his "toughness" through some sort of military action.

Such action is also being advocated by counterinsurgency enthusiasts in the Defense Department, who view antidrug operations as a legitimate form of "low-intensity conflict" [see Klare, "A Blueprint for Endless Intervention," July 30/August 6, 1988]. Among the adherents to this position are Army Col. John Waghelstein, former commander of U.S. military advisers in El Salvador. Charging that Marxist guerrillas have forged an alliance with Latin American drug traffickers, Waghelstein called for vigorous Pentagon action "to counter the guerrilla/narcotics terrorists in this hemisphere." Such action, he contended, would provide the Pentagon with an "unassailable moral position" from which to counter the "church and academic groups" that have resisted U.S. intervention in Central America.

Some military officers perceive another compelling reason for taking on the drug war: increased defense spending. With fears of the "Soviet threat" in decline and concern over the Federal deficit on the rise, the Pentagon has begun to brace itself for significant cutbacks. However, the one area where Congress seeks to raise funds is the antidrug campaign. "In a time when there will be increasing demands for fiscal constraints and selective spending, Congress has already demonstrated that it is willing to provide funding for counternarcotics programs," Maj. Susan Flores wrote in *Marine Corps Gazette*. Because such funds could be used to acquire a wide variety of hardware sought by the military, "before the Marine Corps says 'no' to [fighting] drugs, it should think seriously about what is to be gained."

With such arguments and pressures, the Pentagon is being pushed closer and closer to the brink of direct intervention in Latin America. It is not a task that senior officers look forward to with relish but one that they will eventually be forced to assume when the political pressures become strong enough—and there is no doubt that President Bush, who has declared a full-scale war on drugs and has yet to achieve any notable victories, is feeling the heat.

Undoubtedly, a dramatic effort to solve the drug problem with machine-gun fire in South America will generate a fair amount of applause in the United States, especially in the first few weeks after an initial Army or Marine Corps assault. It will give President Bush an opportunity to demonstrate some machismo and distract attention from other problems at home. But the only sure results of such action will be an upsurge of anti-imperialism in Latin America and only a temporary dip in drug production. Eventually, the production sites will be moved while drug prices rise in the United States and, in reaction, the severity of urban violence will increase.

Halting the devastation of our inner cities and the poisoning of our urban youth is a vital national priority. But at-

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Kinder and gentler for whom?

Almost half—46%—of the children being admitted to Nicaraguan hospitals for dehydration and diarrhea are dying. The death rate from this disease, the most common childhood illness in Nicaragua, has *tripled* since 1986.

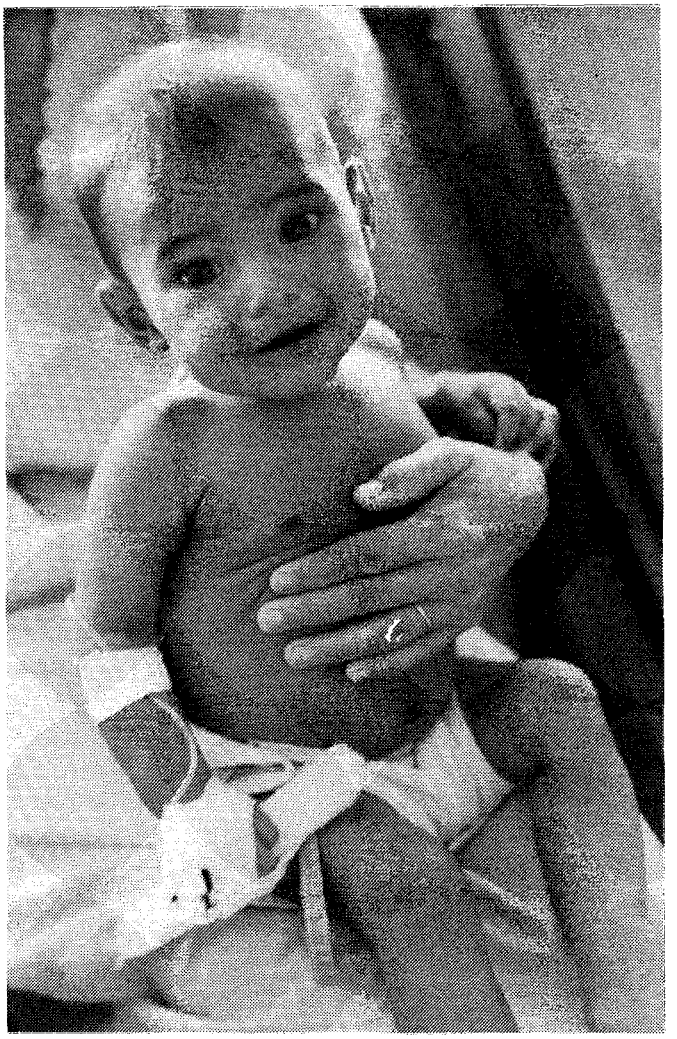
Worse still, this crisis marks the *return* of a health problem that had been brought under control. This childhood death rate *had been reduced to one-half* of what it was under the Somoza dictatorship. For this accomplishment, the new Nicaraguan health care system was acclaimed by the World Health Organization.

But this hard-won gain has been erased as a result of eight years of the Contra war and the US trade embargo, entering its *ninth* year, which is strangling Nicaragua. The purchase of medicines and medical equipment has become all but impossible.

Since 1986, Nicaragua Medical Aid has purchased more than three million doses of needed medicines and large quantities of medical equipment for the people of Nicaragua.

Now, to ensure that as many of the children as possible afflicted with this disease will live, we have set a goal of purchasing 100,000 packets of oral rehydration salts from UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund) immediately.

These packets offer the best treatment for these children. Each



UNICEF rehydration packet can save a child by restoring sufficient blood circulation. Without it, a child can go into shock and die. You can imagine what 100,00 oral rehydration packets will mean for the children of Nicaragua at this time.

Help us send the oral rehydration medicine needed by Nicaragua's children.

Make a difference this holiday season. Help us show that the humanitarian feelings of the American people are greater than the misguided policy of our government.

Your donation will be used to purchase needed oral rehydration packets. And because we buy these from UNICEF, *each dollar* we spend buys approximately *ten dollars worth* of medical supplies. One hundred dollars buys more than fifteen hundred rehydration packets. Your tax-deductible contribution will ensure that more Nicaragua children will survive.

Please act now. The children in Nicaragua cannot afford to wait.

Nicaragua Medical Aid Advisory Board
Ed Asner, *Actor*
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I'm going to help the children of Nicaragua live.

I want to contribute towards the future of the children of Nicaragua by contributing towards the purchase of the medicines necessary to alleviate the present crisis the children there are facing.

Enclosed is ☐ $25 ☐ $50 ☐ $100 ☐ $250 ☐ $_____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

BILL MY ☐ VISA ☐ AMEX ☐ MasterCard _____ CARD NUMBER _____ EXPIRATION DATE

SIGNATURE _____

Please make your tax-deductible contribution payable to: Nicaragua Medical Aid/IAHF (Inter-American Health Foundation)

Nicaragua Medical Aid
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If you would like further information about our work, please call: (415) 841–1644

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tacking peasants in South America is not the answer. Not only would such action risk U.S. entanglement in a debilitating and inconclusive jungle war; it would also drive the cultivators into new (and more inaccessible) areas. Ultimately, the only sure method for reducing the traffic in narcotics is to curb the appetite for these substances through education, treatment and urban economic renewal. As Lieut. Gen. Stephen Olmstead declared at a Congressional hearing, "Interdiction is not the answer to the drug war. Demand-reduction is." □

THE OLIN MONEY TREE

Dollars for Neocon Scholars

JON WIENER

The John M. Olin Foundation is pouring millions of dollars into universities in an effort to reshape the curriculums, take the intellectual initiative away from the academic left and give scholarly legitimacy to Reaganite social and economic policies. The 1988 report of the foundation lists grants of $55 million, most of which help underwrite university programs "intended to strengthen the economic, political, and cultural institutions upon which . . . private enterprise is based."

The list of Olin beneficiaries reads like a who's who of the academic right: Allan Bloom, the 1960s-hating author of the 1987 best seller *The Closing of the American Mind*, is getting $3.6 million to run the University of Chicago's John M. Olin Center for Inquiry into the Theory and Practice of Democracy. Harvard University professor of government Samuel Huntington, best known as a Vietnam War strategist, is getting $1.4 million to establish the Olin Institute for Strategic Studies on campus, along with $618,000 to support the Olin Program in National Security Affairs and $100,000 for his own Olin Research Fellowship—a total of $2.1 million. Neoconservative ideologue Irving Kristol received $376,000 all for himself; this cash supported him first as the John M. Olin Distinguished Professor at the New York University Graduate School of Business Administration, and then as the holder of a John M. Olin Fellowship at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington. Among the fellows there is Robert Bork, Ronald Reagan's failed Supreme Court nominee, who collected $163,000 in 1988 as occupant of the John M. Olin Chair in Legal Studies.

Olin and several smaller conservative foundations provide a vital link between universities and the political world of Republicans in government, right-wing think tanks and conservative publications. They provide fellowships that give academic respectability to ideologues like Robert Leiken, a leading defender of the Nicaraguan *contras*. They buy time off from teaching for conservative scholars to develop arguments justifying right-wing policies, and then help push those ideas into the public discourse, where they can do conservatives some political good.

Allan Bloom, for example, brought Francis Fukuyama, deputy director of the State Department's policy planning staff, to his Olin center at Chicago in 1988 to give a paper, "The End of History?" In it, Fukuyama proclaimed the total victory of the West in the cold war. This paper was then published in *The National Interest* (Summer 1989), a quarterly that has received $1 million from Olin and is edited by Olin donee Irving Kristol. The journal published responses to Fukuyama by Olin grant recipients Bloom, Kristol and Huntington; the "debate" got picked up and featured on the *New York Times* Op-Ed page, in *Time* and in *The Washington Post* [see Christopher Hitchens, "Minority Report," September 25].

The end of history, however, is not the Olin foundation's principal preoccupation. The foundation has committed $5.8 million in current grants toward establishing and supporting a program innocuously called "Law and Economics." This field, founded at the University of Chicago in the late 1960s, applies the principles of "free market economics" to the law. Yale Law School is the biggest recipient of Olin grants supporting this movement: Law professor George Priest is getting a total of $1.5 million for fellowships, lectures, journals and programs under his direction, including $464,000 for himself. The law schools at the University of Chicago, Stanford University and Harvard University are getting close to $1 million each for their Olin programs. The University of Virginia, Duke University, the University of Pennsylvania and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are getting roughly half a million dollars each for theirs. The Olin foundation considers these programs worthwhile because they provide a rationale for right-wing economic policies designed to "get government off our backs."

The goal of the law and economics field is a society in which conflicts are resolved not by government rules or communitarian values but by unregulated markets that set prices on different activities. The field is based on the assumption that human beings are inherently selfish; altruistic behavior, such as giving to "undeserving" welfare mothers, is explained away or dismissed as merely another form of selfishness. The preoccupation is with the cost of desirable ends: Hardly anyone wants accidents, but we must be careful not to overspend on preventing them. Critics on the left, such as Mark Kelman of Stanford Law School, say the "ideological task" of the new field is to prove that the "egoistic cacophony" of the marketplace eventually produces "social harmony."

It might seem hard for any law school to resist Olin's big bucks, but the University of California at Los Angeles did reject an Olin Program in Law and Economics in 1985 after trying it out for a year. The Olin program at U.C.L.A., like the foundation's programs elsewhere, provided John M. Olin Fellowships to students; these students were required to take special new courses where they would learn the law and economics gospel. The courses were directed by John M.

Jon Wiener, a contributing editor of The Nation, *teaches history at the University of California, Irvine.*

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Olin Scholars – faculty members receiving Olin money. Olin fellowship students were also required to attend the John M. Olin Symposium in Law and Economics, which brought prominent right-wing advocates to the campus, among them Bork and Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonin Scalia.

The principal objection to the program at U.C.L.A., in the words of the law school's curriculum committee, was that Olin was "taking advantage of students' financial need to indoctrinate them with a particular ideology." Professor Christine Littleton, a committee member, told her colleagues that if law and economics is worth studying the school should develop its own program and then seek support for it, instead of accepting the Olin Foundation's program and hoping it would not "seriously offend notions of academic value." (Olin did find others at U.C.L.A. willing to accept its money and the strings that come with it: Economist J. Clayburn LaForce and management professor James Wilson are getting $1 million to establish the Olin Center for Policy at U.C.L.A.'s Graduate School of Management.)

Walter Williams, a black neoconservative, has received $200,000 from the Olin foundation. Williams, an economist at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, laments the fact that South Africa's government "owns coal-to-oil conversion plants, railroads, the telephone company, and other major industries." He maintains that Bishop Desmond Tutu, who says he wants socialism for South Africa's future, is already living under a socialist government, which, Williams argues, is the source of many of the problems Tutu has been struggling against.

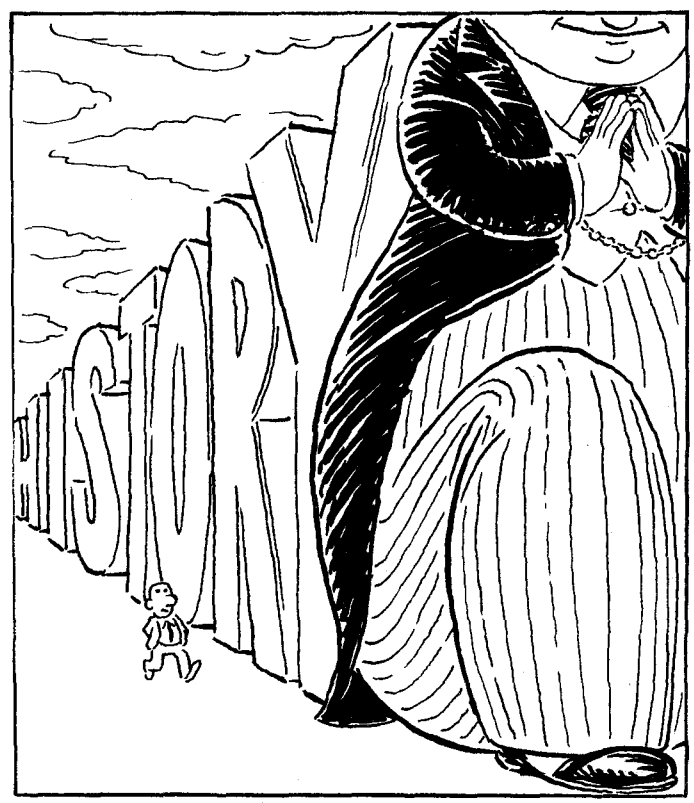
Williams writes a syndicated newspaper column that spreads the free-market gospel, explaining in one of them that the market "reduces human conflict far better than government does." *Human Events*, the extreme right-wing weekly, praised Williams's columns for arguing that "success in the market is color-, sex-, and race-blind and it virtually always comes from pleasing one's fellow man."

Historian François Furet received an Olin grant of $470,000 as director of the John M. Olin Program in the History of Political Culture at the University of Chicago. Furet is the pre-eminent historian in France working to discredit the Marxist interpretation of the French Revolution, which has dominated French scholarship on the revolution for most of this century. During last summer's bicentennial celebration of the revolution, the French media promoted Furet as the celebration's quasi-official historian. Furet's main thesis, as Daniel Singer has explained in these pages ["Dancing on the Grave of Revolution," February 6, 1989], is that revolution is obsolete in today's world. In Singer's words, "For Furet's version to stand, democracy as a concept must be stripped of any economic and social context." Furet was a Communist in his youth; as an old political infighter, he now brings his zeal and strategic sense as a former party member to fight the academic left.

And of course there is Allan Bloom. Bloom's frankly elitist book, supported by Olin grants, described the 1960s as a decade of nihilism and despair. The Bloom operation at the University of Chicago explains in a brochure that its purpose is to provide "a forum for the reconsideration and analysis of the fundamental principles and current practices of American politics . . . in an atmosphere of dispassionate and impartial reflection." Two dispassionate and impartial thinkers who have participated in the reconsidering and analyzing are Scalia, eager to reconsider *Roe v. Wade* (presumably his Olin honorariums didn't compromise the independence of the judiciary), and Wilson, co-director of U.C.L.A.'s Olin Center for Policy.

Olin has funded Peter Collier and David Horowitz, authors of *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts About the Sixties*, who got $200,000 for the 1987 "Second Thoughts" conference of 1960s apostates. And the foundation gave $163,000 to Michael Novak, a conservative Catholic writer whose 1987 book, *Will It Liberate?*, attacks liberation theology and argues that socialism is "a form of self-immolation . . . like rushing willingly into death." Novak's 1984 book, *Freedom with Justice*, was praised by *National Review* for arguing that "the sin of the Left is that it refuses to appreciate . . . the world as it is." *Contra* promoter Robert Leiken got a $75,000 John M. Olin Research Fellowship at Harvard's Center for International Affairs, where he is engaged in "work on media treatment of the conflict in Central America."

Academics on the left, struggling with student papers, staying up late to finish tomorrow's lecture and working weekends on that big article, look enviously at their ideological antagonists, who are freed from time-consuming tasks by generous grants from Olin and other dispensers of neocon largesse. And why shouldn't leftist scholars be envious? Who wouldn't want Allan Bloom's $3.6 million to



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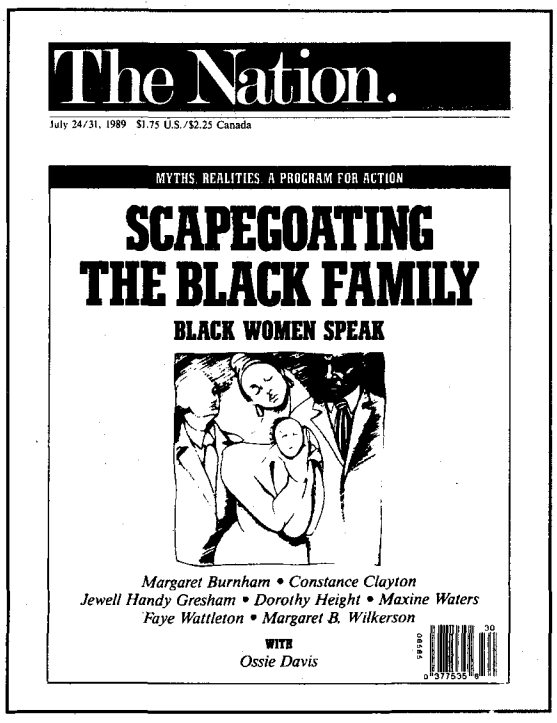
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support his or her intellectual work? The issue, however, is larger than mere envy. Competition between right and left in the marketplace of ideas has been distorted by right-wing money. The Olin foundation is testing the hypotheses that money talks, and that the sound of money talking will drown out critical voices on the left. No doubt somewhere a Distinguished Olin Professor is trying to explain why that's a good thing for the body politic. □

WHITE HOUSE DIARY

Prez V. Uptight Re: Boldness Gap

DOUGLAS McGRATH

Washington

Oct. 6: Prez still taking a beating on Noriega non-coup. At p.-conf. today, Helen Thos. asked, "Didn't we miss our chance? Are you too slow to deal with unfolding events? Shouldn't we strike while the iron's hot?"

Prez said, "Keep your pants on, Helen. We've got an experienced team in place to check out all coup opportunities as they come down that creek. But I'm sorry: If the next coup we have a shot at is a loser like this one, *no sale. Return to sender. We pasadena.* But let the word of this President go out: The United States is not out of the coup business. You get a winner coup in here, one that will succeed with no risks to the Americans involved, and wham! It's ours!"

Privately, all of us v. relieved coup flopped. As Prez said re: N., "The big brown one knows everything we've done down there in that region. If we bring Nory to trial, he'll talk—and then I am history! Out of here! Mr. Impeachment-Article-Approved!"

Malta summit w/Gorb still secret. Will hold meeting at sea. This perfect as it keeps G. from getting out of limos and being popular. Sunu and Fitzy both get seasick but Prez says water at Malta is "glass-city."

Oct. 9: Began day as usual w/polling people re: Prez's numbers. Up 2% thanks to Atwa's ABC strat. on Nory flap: Always Blame Congress. At photo-op w/Jessica McClure, the Texas well girl, Prez beautifully ABC'd the Nory story. Said: "And I think you've got to look at this Congress. Those oversight committees. These marvelous liberal laws that box us in without any way to respond: Kidnapping—can't do it. The liberals say no. Killing—can't do that either. Ixnay says Ongresscay!"

Then Nat. Sec. meeting. Scow wants a White Paper to see if the exodus of over a million people from East Germany is just P.R. CIA wants budget upped. Needs to double staff at threat-magnification desk.

Douglas McGrath's fax machine continues to receive installments of an unnamed, high-level official's White House diaries. The first appeared in the October 23 issue.

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Oct. 12: Supreme Court and spouses here tonight for gala dinner to kick off NRA's "Buy a Second Handgun" campaign. Had to pull Prez for call from Gorb. Gorb said he wanted Prez to know he was planning a big, bold initiative. What is it? Prez asked. Gorb just chuckled. Then he *hung up*! Prez shocked: "For heaven's sake—he ripcorded me!"

Returning to Blue Room, Prez knew everyone would be watching for signs of anxiety, so was v. Mr. Smooth. I could tell, however, he was distracted. During dessert he ate his sherbet with a knife.

Oct. 13: No change in Prez's numbers since yesterday. Q.'s numbers, though, v. odd: over 40%—*up* from 25—said they didn't know enough about Q. to make a judgment. Thus longer people see Q., less they know about him. Baker said this could be Q.'s one asset. Atwa thinks answer is to sched. focus groups to see what people would like in Q. and then run ads telling them he has it.

Prez ordered daily intelligence briefings doubled on Gorb. V. concerned re: that phone call. Fears G. planning something big for Malta. Rode w/Prez on way to Skull & Bones fall barbecue. Prez usually so excited re: S&B. Today, though, v. quiet; mostly played w/the electric door lock. Finally he said, "You'd think he'd get tired of being bold."

Post lunch, RR called from Bel Air. Has signed a $2 million contract with Sears to endorse a line of lawnmowers. Called the Lawn Chief. Wants to use Presidential Seal on the grassbags. Will we OK?

Oct. 17: Told Fitzy to announce impending veto for funding of abortions for victims of rape or incest. Prez hedged all aft. Tried to think of a million outs, but knew Righters would kill. Finally, "I don't see any way around it: I've got to stick to my position!"

At poll meeting, slight prob. developing for Prez. Growing percentage of public (17%) can't remember if Prez is P. or V.P. Atwa fears this due to 17% not knowing who the V.P. is. Must do something w/ Q. Trick is how to sneak Q. into public's thoughts w/o getting Q.'s thoughts into public's thoughts. Sig Rogich, new image man, put to work on Sublim.-Op. Will report back.

(*12:30 AM*) Prez called. Said he had been woken by phone call from Gorb. Gorb wanted to know if he'd told Prez that he was planning a "big, bold initiative." Prez said he had, but not what it was. "Good," Gorb said, "just checking." And hung up! Prez frantic.

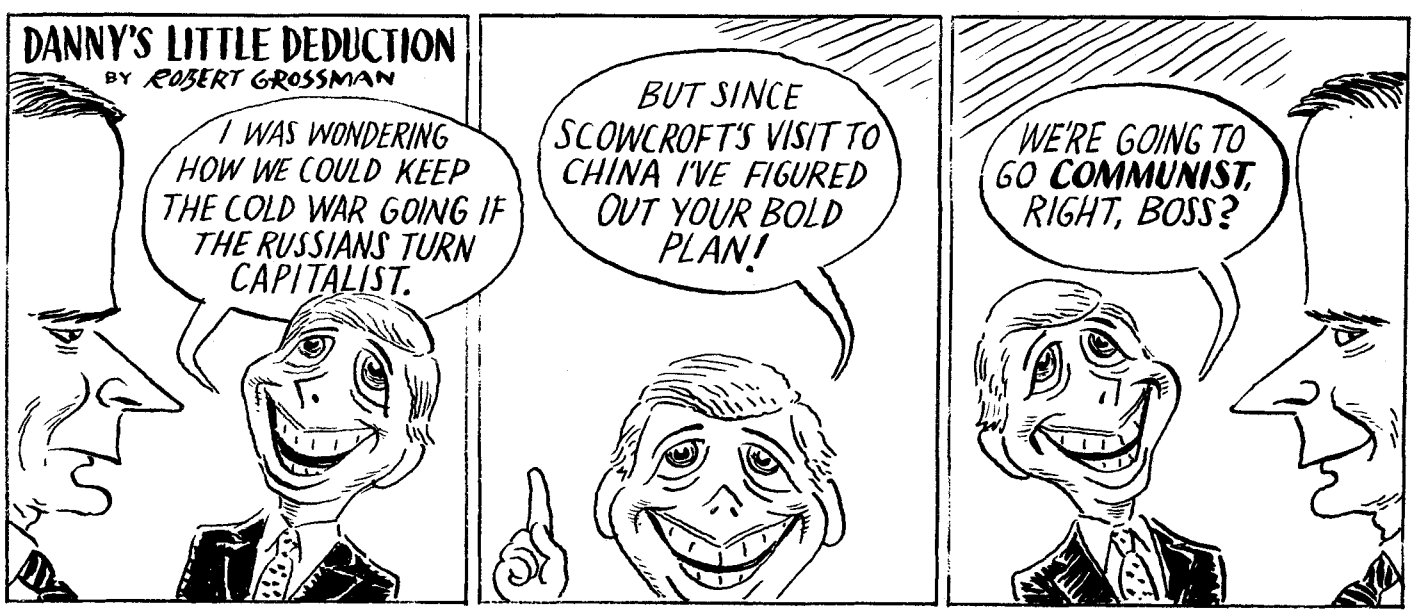
Oct. 18: Prez's numbers softening due to abortion stand. Then great news: A big quake hit San Francisco! That should take people's minds off the veto. Atwa wants to send Q. out for pics. "His numbers will kick ass when people see how much he cares about dead people and real estate." Baker all for this. Said privately to me, "This may be our best shot at getting him off the '92 ticket—with any luck, there'll be an aftershock!"

At NSC Scow ordered White Paper on likelihood that Honecker will make real and not just cosmetic changes in East G. Canceled a little after 4 when Honecker resigned. Agreed Cheney to announce $180 billion in Def. cuts. Thanks to RR's Buffer-Op., that leaves us $320 billion before we actually have to cut anything.

Oct. 21: Prez vetoed Medicaid bill on abortion for rape and incest. Sunu, w/an eye on polls and upcoming elections, told all to put out the line of the day. Prez said he feared that "someone who wasn't raped might take the money for an abortion." A "high-level White House official" was quoted in *Post* as saying, "If there's a free abortion in it, where's the incentive for a woman not to get raped?" Must review line of the day more closely with Q.

Oct. 23: Terrible day. Shevy announced that USSR apologized for its invasion of Afgh. and said it was "a moral mistake." Everyone agreed this is G.'s big, bold move. (He'd have to tear down the Berlin wall to top this.) But then a wire came. It was from G. It said, "That wasn't it."

Oct. 31: Prez. v. testy w/press portrayal of him as too prudent. The "W" thing makes him ballistic. Matters not


DANNY'S LITTLE DEDUCTION
BY ROBERT GROSSMAN
I WAS WONDERING HOW WE COULD KEEP THE COLD WAR GOING IF THE RUSSIANS TURN CAPITALIST.
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WE'RE GOING TO GO COMMUNIST, RIGHT, BOSS?

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helped by Gorb, who has started calling him "Prudy." (Prez swears that next time he goes to Moscow, "I'm going to boot in his bedroom!")

So Prez calls p.-conf. to announce Malta summit. Stahl asked, "Sir, did you arrange this summit to correct the impression that you are too timid?" Prez snapped, "Certainly not! Sit down! Is that the kind of question they teach in those marvelous 'journalism' schools?"

Lowering expectations vital for success. So Prez initiated Op. Low.-Ex. 56. He told Bob Schieffer, "We plan to bring no proposals to the meeting whatsoever. Not going to bring them. Not a proposal kind of meeting. Won't even bring the briefcase." After p.-conf., Prez immediately ordered NSC and State to draw up proposals for summit. Networks focusing on "feet-up" aspect. Press buys Op. Low.-Ex. every time. Unbelievable.

Nov. 3: Scow ordered White Paper on whether Krenz represents any real change in East G. or if it's just cosmetic. Canceled a little after 6 when half of East G. Cabinet resigned. Ordered White Paper on whether possible to get a White Paper written before it has to be canceled.

Prez completely unready for these changes. *Post* wondered today in ed. if Prez could be the "bold visionary the dramatic situation requires." Prez: "If I'd wanted to be a visionary, I would have gone into advertising!"

Is becoming obsessed w/what G. might be planning. During a meeting with Atwa re: next week's election, took extensive notes, but afterward I saw they were all doodles: "Vision thing . . . Bold gets old . . . Old Boldie . . . Old bald Boldie . . ." Went outside to throw horseshoes but was so distracted he threw one through the window and hit Q.

Q., who thinks everything is a loyalty test, said, "Good shot, sir!"

Nov. 9: Elections v. bad for us. Atwa says Prez must soften abortion stance somehow. So Prez read this statement: "Some say it's a human life, sacred and inviolate. Others say it's just a ball of cells and saliva. Some say abortion is no different an operation than plastic surgery. Others call it coldblooded murder. Obviously, this is an issue where there is room for a breadth of opinion."

Wall coming down! At last, Gorb's big, bold initiative, and it wasn't an embarrassing proposal at Malta in front of the world. Elated Prez said to summon W.H. press to Oval Office. But as I rounded them up, Gorb called. All he said was, "It isn't the wall." Then hung up. Press came in. Prez couldn't contain anger at G. during pictures. Must get Prez to not look bitter about spread of democracy.

At Prez's urging, Baker convened Vision-Boosting Study Group to coordinate bold proposals for Malta. No ideas yet. Broke up early.

Nov. 12: Q. on *Meet the Press*. Said that Soviets haven't changed. Q: "I still don't think, for instance, that you can charge things in the Soviet Union. The Communists are afraid that people will charge a lot of stuff and then defect without paying. And what about right on red? They're not even *talking* about that. If they're not ready for right on red, you think they're ever going to tear down the Berlin wall? Allow any kind of free travel to the West? Think about it."

Nov. 20: RR called. To help us make up our minds about the Lawn Chief, he wanted us to know Cabinet members will get mowers at 20% off.

Prez in Chicago today. During speech was heckled by nuns who are against the murder of priests in El Salvador. Prez barked at the nuns, "Now you be quiet!" When they continued to heckle him, he got off the dais, went down to one of them and tied her habit into a knot. On flight back, said to me, "I am pumped! Bring on the G-man!"

U.S.S. Belknap

Dec. 2: Fitzy went off diet, but it didn't matter. He's thrown it all up back here. To keep from being sick, Sunu lies on floor, legs elevated, and converts fractions.

This is the big day: Prez met Gorb. All of us frantic Gorb would spring his trap in front of the press, so right after sitting down, Prez unleashed all the proposals we said we weren't bringing: the accelerated arms control timetable, normalization of economic relations, endorsement of Gorb's reforms at home. The only proposal Gorb made was to accept everything we offered them. Nothing big or bold.

Then they met privately.

Gorb said, "You may remember I told you about a big, bold initiative I have in mind." Prez said he remembered. G.

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was silent for a moment, then faced the Prez. "Just kidding!" he said.

Prez looked seasick. "You mean I've been bold for nothing?" he asked. "I can't believe you're not going to be bold!"

Air Force 1

On way to Brussels. Prez v. peeved. Issued new guidelines for future: no unilateral boldness. If boldness required, use covert boldness. Any public boldness should be coordinated with Soviet Union. □

Economic War

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

far Palestinians have persisted in their efforts to wean their crippled economy from dependence on Israel. In so doing they have struck some painful blows at the Israeli economy, but at enormous cost to themselves. How long they can hold out, and what will happen when they hit bottom, remains to be seen.

By the time the uprising erupted in December 1987, the Palestinian economy had become completely dependent on the Israeli economy. Through its military government in the territories, Israel controlled every aspect of economic life with regulations, military laws and the requirement of permits for all forms of economic enterprise, down to the planting of a single tree. The Palestinians provided cheap labor and a captive market for Israeli goods—indeed, the territories were Israel's second most important market after the United States. In turn, Palestinians were allowed to sell selected products to Israel, but only those that met Israeli standards or would not compete with Israeli produce. These limits insured a healthy trade surplus in Israel's favor—$802 million in 1987.

Jordan, the Palestinians' other main export market, was equally, if not more, restrictive. Jordan often barred selected industrial and agricultural exports on short notice, and, in keeping with the requirements of the Arab boycott of Israel, insisted that raw materials for Palestinian exports had to enter the area through Jordanian, not Israeli, ports. After disengaging from the West Bank in 1988 Jordan became even more reluctant to import Palestinian goods.

Although individual Palestinian consumption levels—as measured by the acquisition of cars, color TVs and the like—rose after 1967, the Palestinian economy as a whole stagnated. It had no financial sector, no investment and no development. Industry, virtually nonexistent, contributed a mere 8 percent to the gross national product. Palestinian industry is "about like that of Chad," said Ephraim Ahiram, former head of the West Bank military government's economic branch, now an economics professor at Hebrew University. "There are only five companies with more than 100 employees." Many of the remaining fledgling industries are firms subcontracting for Israeli companies, not enterprises generating capital for Palestinians. Companies with the potential to contribute to local economic growth have frequently been denied permits because they would compete with Israeli enterprises, as in the case of a group that has been trying to build a cement factory in Hebron for years.

By the mid-1980s more than half of Gaza's labor force of 88,000 and 30 percent of the West Bank's labor force were working in Israel since well-paying jobs in the territories were scarce. Many went through the "slave markets," pickup points at major urban intersections where Israeli contractors would drive by to hire day laborers for menial jobs refused by Israelis. Others got more stable employment, but mainly in construction, garbage collection and restaurant and hotel services.

Only about 15 percent of the workers in the territories were able to find jobs suited to their training or educational level. As a result, each year about 15,000 Palestinians—two-thirds of the natural population growth—went to the Persian Gulf in search of a better life. Their remittances came to exceed the combined economic contribution of the agricultural and industrial sectors. Indeed, by 1985 external remittances constituted 45 percent of the G.N.P. of the territories.

Also by the mid-1980s, work in Israel had attracted so many agricultural laborers that Palestinian agriculture lost one-third of its share of G.N.P., and the land under cultivation in the territories diminished by 21 percent from 1967 levels. This development had great political significance, for, according to various laws, uncultivated land is subject to confiscation. Israel has taken 51 percent of the land and 70 percent of the water in the West Bank and Gaza since 1967. It has also hooked up the territories to its own electricity grid, replacing indigenous electric companies.

This web of economic relationships and dependencies created among some Palestinians a somewhat bourgeois desire for the occupation to continue in perpetuity, so they could maintain a cushy life style based on an unhealthy economy. "The *intifada* was directed in part toward trying to curb excessive consumerism," said Hisham Awartani, a professor at Najah University in the West Bank and the leading Palestinian economist in the territories. "The economic base in the territories does not permit such levels of consumerism. It was clear that people had become hostages to Israel, and that they had begun psychologically even to accept their subjugation to Israel."

The underground command of the uprising has gradually articulated a number of economic strategies. According to Palestinian economists, these strategies have at least three overriding goals. The first is, as Awartani said, to alter Palestinian spending habits. The second is to encourage the entire populace to become active participants in the rebellion, even if only by boycotting Israeli cigarettes or growing vegetables in their backyards. The third is to jolt Palestinians out of their complacency as passive consumers and subjects of occupation, to show them that it is possible to control their own well-being and act, not just react.

Kate Rouhana, a freelance writer based in Arlington, Massachusetts, lived in Jerusalem from 1984 to 1987 and visited the region twice this past year.

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The three goals are part of what Palestinians call "building the new society," which to them represents a critical dimension of the *intifada*. The slogan is less concrete than it sounds. "It's very clear that during the *intifada*, you cannot build the economic infrastructure for a state," said Samir Hleileh, a consultant to the newly formed Economic Development Group in East Jerusalem. "For now, we're talking about a survival economy. When we get our state, we'll have to build another kind of infrastructure."

One of the more notable successes of the Palestinian economic strategy has been the boycott of Israeli products. Strike forces of young militants reportedly monitor merchants' compliance with the boycott, tracking down the source of all new or suspect merchandise. They have on occasion found Israeli goods being sold with Arabic packaging, masquerading as local goods, and Arab merchants who fronted these goods have been punished with long boycotts. Commodities made by Palestinian citizens of Israel, however, are considered "kosher." Some European products have been rejected because they used Israeli packaging. The packaging for a Spanish detergent was redesigned after Palestinian activists pointed out to the Spanish consulate that no one bought it because it looked like an Israeli product. "We'll have to suffer for the next few years, but we're slowly putting up barriers to protect our products," explained Hleileh. "We're making Israel and the territories into two different markets."

The boycott and the general economic malaise that come with strikes and lengthy Israeli-imposed curfews have wrought a deeper and longer-lasting psychological transformation in consumer habits. "The name of the game is cut, cut, cut," said Awartani. Construction on new houses ground to a halt at the beginning of the *intifada* and has yet to rebound to earlier levels. Commodities that had become basics—soft drinks, ice cream, daily meat, new appliances, second cars and even first cars—have all but disappeared from households. Cars are used extremely sparingly: Car pools and passenger fares are not uncommon, and trips within walking distance are made on foot. Store-bought toys and clothes for children have become rare treats.

One of the main ways Palestinians have cut expenses is by doing away with the elaborate wedding ceremonies that used to be the nexus of social life, not to mention the high point of a family's life and a gala opportunity for the showiest kind of consumerism. From the beginning of the *intifada*, weddings were drastically curtailed as a recognition of living in a permanent state of mourning for those who had been slain. Today's weddings are purely functional—a religious figure officiates, the bride and groom and their families attend and the small group shares a round of coffee afterward.

Palestinian economists say that in some sectors local production is beginning to replace boycotted goods. The number of cows, for example, has shot up, and the number of laying chickens has almost doubled. According to Hleileh, the community is close to becoming self-sufficient in its production of eggs and dairy products. And a few food processing enterprises—albeit extremely small-scale—are in the works. However, several small-time grocers have been forced to close their doors for lack of goods or customers.

On the other hand, many of the leadership's tactics have proved unworkable, such as the call for households to grow their own produce. Issued in a leaflet in March 1988, the purpose of the plan was to help people survive curfews and military sieges of towns and to foster a broader sense of popular participation after mass arrests threatened to put a damper on the uprising. Unfortunately, gardening on a small scale proved to be as complex as farming on a large scale. The campaign did, however, attract the attention of the military, which placed one of the most prominent advocates, Jad Isaac, a professor at Bethlehem University in Beit Sahur, under administrative detention for six months.

An attempt to enforce a blanket boycott of jobs in Israel has also been unsuccessful. The most workers have done is to stay home on general strike days. In retaliation, and in the wake of the murder of two Israelis in Gaza in May, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin ordered all Gazan workers to stay home for several weeks until Israeli desires for revenge had cooled. Gaza is particularly vulnerable to such tactics, because its border with Israel is open only at three completely controlled points. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, Rabin wanted to show the Palestinians that they could not take their jobs in Israel for granted. Another high-level military official was quoted as saying, "The Gaza population should know that we—and not some leaflet—decide when and how life is to be disrupted."

In order to return to work in Israel, Gazans then had to obtain new magnetic ID cards, which the official in charge of the operation described as "an honesty card, given to anyone who is cleared by the security forces or tax authorities." (Gazans had to pay 20 shekels—$10—for each

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card; these funds reportedly went into a pool to pay for stoneproof car windows for Jewish settlers.) Thousands—including anyone with any kind of security or criminal record—failed to pass that test; others did not dare go through it. They lost daily wages of $30-$50 and their ability to support their families.

Those who got the ID cards were in for another tug of war when youths active in the strike forces went from house to house confiscating the cards in an attempt to stop the campaign. Some workers reapplied, only to have their cards confiscated a second time.

Eventually, both the Israelis and the Palestinians realized the dangers in store if a standoff forced all Gazan laborers to remain at home permanently. So the youths stopped confiscating the cards, which are now in use. But about 30,000 Gazans failed to qualify for them, and were forced to search for work in Gaza or join the ranks of the unemployed.

Efforts to instigate a tax revolt have not been particularly successful either, because the authorities, in addition to levying new taxes, have made sure no one can move around without having paid taxes. Gazans going to work in the morning, for example, have to pass a computerized tax checkpoint at the border with Israel. If they owe back taxes, their cars are impounded and accrue daily fines until they pay. For fishermen, it's their boats. For merchants, it's their produce or their equipment. And any Palestinian who wishes to travel abroad, or to register a birth, a death, a car or almost anything else must first clear seven official tax and security checks. Each of the clearances must be obtained in person at the appropriate office, where hundreds of people line up for the same purpose. Each clearance takes several frustrating hours to obtain, which adds up to many days of lost work.

One of the more infamous new taxes is the "*intifada* tax," as it has come to be called, which Israel has levied on all Palestinian cars, donkey carts and bicycles in the territories. For the past two years drivers have had to pay $250 to $1,000 just to keep their cars on the road. This is in addition to insurance and registration fees and to time lost waiting in lines to get the requisite seven permits. Donkey carts are licensed for $250 each, bicycles for $15.

Some believe the Israelis' punitive tactics will backfire because Palestinian money and patience are nearly exhausted. It's impossible to gauge how many unregistered cars are on the roads, but their numbers are growing. One man explained that he has decided to sell his car and rent on an annual basis because it ends up being cheaper "and the rental company pays all the insurance." Another option is to leave the car at home and walk.

The only case of mass refusal to pay taxes has been in Beit Sahur, a predominantly middle-class Christian town of 12,000 in the West Bank. Several hundred of its residents decided not to pay any more taxes this past fall, so Rabin decided to make an example of the town: "There will not be any attempt to boycott taxes. If it takes a month, it will take a month, but they will break. We are going to teach them a lesson." The army closed off the town for a month and a half, and Israeli tax authorities confiscated millions of dollars' worth of personal and commercial goods. These are to be sold at an auction at which Palestinians are forbidden to bid. Rabin's lesson seems to have been lost on the residents of Beit Sahur. In some cases tax officers pleaded with Palestinians to pay just one shekel to forestall confiscations, but were refused. Wives allegedly threatened to divorce their husbands if they paid taxes. One woman ran after a tax officer as he was carting off her color TV and gave him the remote control. "Here," she said, "take this too—the TV won't work without it."

The Israeli reaction to the tax strike in Beit Sahur and other resistance tactics may herald a shift from a primarily military to a primarily economic strategy to quell the *intifada*. In recent weeks, the Israelis have staged tax raids in Ramallah and Nablus, the two largest West Bank cities. With growing economic losses of its own, Israel is under increasing pressure to regain the upper hand. Its balance of trade with the territories plummeted to $42 million in 1988. Sales of agricultural produce, textiles, rubber, minerals, cigarettes, clothing and food have all fallen sharply. Tourism has slumped too, dropping by $280 million in 1988. The reduced supply of cheap labor—and its unreliability due to curfews and strikes—has also affected the Israeli economy. And the greatest drain has been the military expense of policing the territories, which is estimated to total $500 million by March.

Despite its determination to tighten the economic screws, Israel faces a delicate dilemma. "We have to strike a balance between actions that could bring on terrible economic distress," Rabin said in February, "and measures which bind them to the Israeli administration and prevent civil disobedience."

As Palestinians in the territories are squeezed harder, two reactions will become more likely: civil disobedience of a relatively benign sort, like not registering births; and frustration with the Palestine Liberation Organization's soft, patient and piecemeal approach to the "peace process." It's hard for the average Palestinian to keep the subtleties of the diplomatic chess game in perspective. Many want to take the *intifada* further *now*, to move more rapidly toward independence, to administer "shock treatment," to get revenge—even if that means taking up weapons.

Whatever its attractions to Israeli defense planners, economic pressure is not likely to produce greater Palestinian moderation. It is no longer possible to speak of "binding the population to the Israeli administration." The Palestinians have many unusual resources to withstand economic hardship: close extended families; a social tradition of collective responsibility for individual welfare; a small, tightly knit community; and long practice in living without heat or electricity.

The Palestinians are unlikely to give up their two-year rebellion, which has cost hundreds of lives and made significant international and internal gains, merely because of economic hardship. If the situation does become desperate, it is hard to imagine that the people would vent their anger on anything but Israel. As the *intifada* enters its third year, the economic struggle may emerge as the crux of a volatile new phase. □

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El Salvador:
A Government at War with Its Own People

Six Jesuit priests murdered in cold blood by soldiers of the U.S.-funded army. Bombs, rockets, and machine gun-fire raining down from U.S.-supplied aircraft on innocent civilians in densely populated neighborhoods of San Salvador. Martial law decreed, abolishing all civil rights. The press muzzled by military censorship. Religious, labor, and political leaders driven into hiding.

This is the Salvadoran government's response to their people's dramatic uprising in demand of democratic change.

Six Jesuit Priests slain by army death squad, November 16. Many other religious leaders have been threatened by the army and are now in hiding.

> In one nearby hut, a rocket from a helicopter killed a mother and her two daughters.
>
> "The army's firing from their helicopters like madmen," said Raul Hernandez Martinez, whose 11-year-old son was killed in another explosion.
>
> —*San Francisco Chronicle*, November 13, 1989

Seeing broad civilian support for the rebel offensive, the U.S.-supplied Salvadoran Air Force has indiscriminately bombed densely populated urban neighborhoods.

Incredibly, the official policy of President Bush is to prop up the brutal regime in El Salvador, supplying it with **$1.5 million daily** in weapons and financial aid. And now, in an eerie replay of Vietnam, the Administration won't rule out the use of U.S. troops in the fighting.

El Salvador's People Have Risen Up for Their Freedom

After suffering decades of U.S.-backed military dictatorship and poverty, the Salvadoran people have risen up in revolt. Their uprising raises hopes for a democratic future—free of hunger and death squad terror.

Residents of many neighborhoods and towns have taken to the streets, building barricades and trenches to keep the army out. Their revolt has been sparked by a nation-wide offensive, beginning November 11, of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), the rebel alliance fighting for democracy and social reform in El Salvador.

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The FMLN, conscious of its responsibility to the people, has undertaken to construct and operate ***Emergency Mobile Hospital Units*** in areas under government attack in order to provide treatment to injured civilians and FMLN members.

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(Contributions are not tax-deductible.)

The U.S.-El Salvador Institute for Democratic Development: Making Salvadoran Voices Heard

The U.S.-El Salvador Institute for Democratic Development is a new national organization of U.S. citizens, with its office in San Francisco. The Institute has a mission both educational and humanitarian in character.

With its unlimited access to the national media, the Bush Administration has tried to convince the people of the United States that U.S. intervention in El Salvador is justified in the name of "national security interests," and it has attempted to portray a home-grown rebellion against tyranny as "Soviet-backed subversion" against the United States. For too long, the Institute believes, these Cold War pretexts of U.S. intervention in Central America have not been adequately challenged in the United States.

The Institute proposes to open debate on U.S. policy by bringing before U.S. audiences the protagonists of El Salvador's movement for democracy, to let them speak for themselves, and have a fair hearing in the United States. Thus the Institute makes available official representatives of the FMLN to participate in public forums, and debates as well as interviews with the media.

At the same time, the Institute works to defend and promote the rights of Salvadorans affected by the war, including members of the FMLN, to receive prompt humanitarian assistance to relieve the traumas of war. The Institute is a sponsor of the *Bravo Fund*, which will provide this humanitarian assistance for prospects for the war wounded and their dependents. The Bravo Fund was established in memory of Dr. Alejandro Bravo Betancourt, a Mexican doctor assassinated in El Salvador by the Salvadoran army on February 13, 1989.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

The Merger That Wasn't

VICTOR NAVASKY

A few weeks ago, *The New Republic* marked its 75th anniversary. In 1990, *The Nation* celebrates its 125th. Once the two journals were thought to be so close that they might as well have been joined at the hip. Nowadays only the 249 million Americans who don't read them aren't in on the secret that they have long since gone their separate political ways. Although both are still to the left of the far right, they differ in tendencies, emphases, analyses, values and perspectives on issues ranging from affirmative action, the meaning and status of the cold war, Israel and the P.L.O., feminism, presidential politics and so forth. The main thing they appear to have in common is the medium rather than the message—they are both journals of opinion; they are both weeklies that become fortnightlies over the summer; they both lose money; they both have circulations in the vicinity of 100,000—*The New Republic*'s is an estimated 105,000 and *The Nation*'s circa 90,000 (but we are gaining fast!)—and against a background of failing newspapers and stillborn magazines, each appears to be a permanent fixture. Imagine my surprise, then, when I recently discovered in several archives a lengthy paper trail spanning the postwar decade, documenting detailed plans and negotiations for a merger between these two venerable, fiercely independent periodicals. In an era of media mergermania and takeover frenzy there may be something to be learned from this mini-merger that didn't happen.

On paper it seemed to make sense. As W.D. Patterson, for *The Nation*, wrote in May 1949 to Michael Straight, editor and publisher of *New Republic*, "We regard the merger not only as a logical publishing step, but as a combined opportunity and responsibility to serve the future of liberal journalism in this country."

Encouraged by the young book publisher George Braziller, who also believed these venerable weeklies should merge, the lawyers for *The Nation* and *New Republic*, Irving Engel and Milton C. Rose, respectively, had been meeting for almost a year. Indeed, in preparation for their first meeting, in July 1948, Evans Clark, head of the Twentieth Century Fund and, not incidentally, husband to Freda Kirchwey, editor and publisher of *The Nation*, had helped put together an eleven-page background memorandum to serve as the basis for discussion. "*New Republic* and *The Nation* are obviously the two outstanding organs of liberal opinion in the U.S.," it began. "By and large, their attitude and point of view—barring minor differences on specific issues—are very much the same.

"Ideologically and politically, there has been very little excuse for two separate publications." The memorandum went on to list the "cogent editorial and publishing arguments for consolidating these two magazines":

§ That 1948-1958 would be a decade of "challenge and opportunity for American liberalism" calling for intellectual leadership of the sort "a strong magazine" could provide.

§ That *New Republic* and *The Nation* united would be "far stronger than the sum of their separate strengths."

§ That, published separately, each magazine operates at a loss, whereas merged they could make ends meet.

§ That "each of the present magazines is far too dependent on a single controlling individual."

They proposed a relatively simple business plan: to merge *The Nation*'s 40,000 circulation with *New Republic*'s 47,000. Discounting their estimated overlap in subscribers, they projected a starting circulation of 75,000 (60,000 subscribers, 15,000 newsstand sales) for the merged magazine. With a cover price of $7 a year and a magazine that alternated between thirty-two and forty pages an issue and a $400 per-page advertising rate—they estimated they could sell an average of two and a half pages per issue—they'd be off and running. All that remained to be decided was the division of labor between Kirchwey and Straight as well as some "details" like the format and title of the merged magazine and a new contract with the Newspaper Guild. If they could announce the merger after the 1948 election but before January 1, 1949, they could build momentum in time for the peak direct-mail promotion period of January to March.

Actually, Michael Straight and *New Republic* were just emerging from a traumatic ride on the readership roller coaster. In 1946, when Straight joined the magazine his family had funded since its inception in 1914, its circulation was, he later recalled, down around 20,000—too small, he thought, to survive in the postwar world. His circulation gimmick? Invite former Vice President Henry A. Wallace, who had just been fired by Harry Truman as Secretary of Commerce, to be the new editor. Wallace's critique of the Truman Administration seemed just the thing to drive up circulation.

Wallace accepted, Straight became publisher, poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into the mails, and within a year three things happened: *New Republic*'s circulation shot up to 90,000 (although the advertising revenue expected to accompany the rise never materialized); Wallace resigned as editor and accepted the Progressive Party's nomination as a candidate for the presidency of the United States, whereupon *New Republic* canceled his weekly column and ended up supporting Truman (*The Nation*, believing a third party counterproductive, but disheartened by Truman's cold warriorism, supported nobody); and *New Republic* lost 50,000 Wallacite readers.

The lawyers met, the accountants met, the treasurers met, Kirchwey and Straight conferred and memorandums moved back and forth; but by July 11, 1949, the deal remained undone and Kirchwey wrote Straight (then both editor and publisher) that as a result of recent conversations with *New Republic* editorial director Bruce Bliven and others, she had some "fundamental doubts." She feared that the *New Republic* people favored the merger for the wrong reasons—as an economy measure rather than "as an opportunity to create a powerful liberal journal." They had what she dubbed a "storm cellar" psychology, and it worried her. For example, the latest projection of newsstand sales was only 8,000, which was "almost exactly the present level of *Nation* sales."

Despite word from Straight's attorney that "Mike is determined to make every effort to bring the merger off," on August 29, 1949, Straight forwarded to Kirchwey via Dan Mebane, *New Republic*'s treasurer, a document setting forth the *New Republic* consensus on what the new magazine should be. Instead of alternating between forty and thirty-two pages he proposed thirty-two pages, period. Instead of projecting a startup

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circulation of 75,000 he assumed only 45,000 subscribers and 8,500 newsstand sales per week. Instead of Kirchwey running the editorial section and Straight the articles section, as had been discussed, Straight's idea was that Kirchwey be in charge of articles.

Thus it probably came as no surprise that on September 9, 1949, back from vacation in the Springs on Long Island, Kirchwey wrote her friends at *New Republic* to say that the deal was no deal, and that while she continued to believe that a merger was worth struggling for "if it results in a magazine far stronger and more effective than either of the present existing magazines, certainly nothing like that is anticipated in the memorandum you mailed me on August 29.

"Perhaps at some later date we can start all over again on a different basis. Meanwhile, good luck to us both!"

End of round one.

Over the next two years both publications suffered financial and political stresses. *New Republic*'s woes were compounded by family problems. Michael Straight's brother, Whitney, and the family's legal advisers wanted him to shut down the magazine because of all the money it was losing, and in any event he was put on notice that the annual $150,000 subsidy that the magazine realized from the family trust was in jeopardy.

Moreover, *New Republic* had lost its main advertiser, General Electric, as a result of the magazine's wartime exposé of that company's ties to the Krupp arms-dealing empire in Nazi Germany. In his 1983 memoir, *After Long Silence*, which neglects to mention the negotiations with *The Nation*, Straight writes that in December 1951, Milton Rose told him that *New Republic* was "in worse financial shape than we had supposed"; he felt that "at best, we might keep it going until spring." On the theory that "it would be better to close down the *New Republic* in a dignified manner than to see it dishonor its own tradition" by being sold to an inappropriate buyer, Straight began work on what he thought would be his final editorial. But the staff, rallied by Washington editor Helen Fuller, offered to work without pay and Straight decided to pay for the magazine out of his own savings while he hunted for "a friend who could keep it going."

Describing his search "for wealthy liberals who might take over," Straight mentions flying to Dallas to see Stanley Marcus, to Chicago to see Marshall Field and

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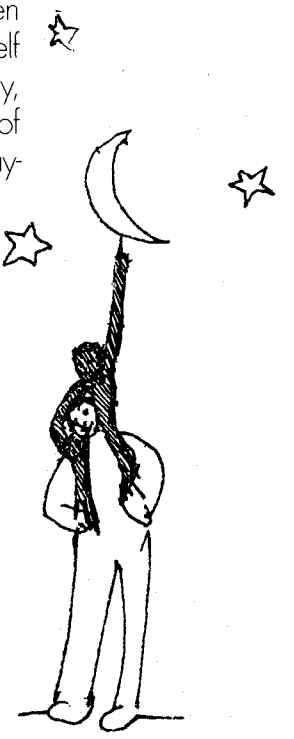

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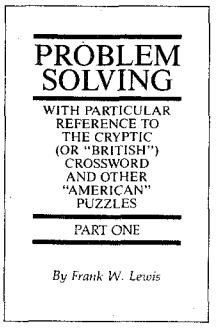
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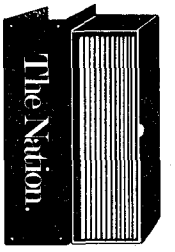

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to New York to see Averell Harriman, all to no avail. What he omits, however, is a call he made to Carey McWilliams, who by this time had left California to work as a de facto editorial director with Freda Kirchwey in New York. Unaware of the prior round of negotiations, an intrigued McWilliams immediately told Kirchwey about the conversation.

The Nation, meanwhile, was in the process of reorganizing into a limited partnership as a new fundraising tactic. If there was a real possibility of a merger, the limited partnership plan might have to be reassessed. So McWilliams wrote Straight to say that if Straight was serious about doing business, the lawyers should meet posthaste; otherwise *The Nation* would go ahead with its own internal reorganization.

Straight said he was serious, but negotiations now hit another snag. Where was the new mag to be located? In 1950 Straight had moved *New Republic* and his family to Washington, and on September 19, 1952, he wrote McWilliams that since D.C. was the political center, it made sense for a political magazine to be published from there. McWilliams responded three days later that as the political center, Washington "allows for very little perspective, which is the lifeblood of a political magazine. Outside of the New Republic I know of no publication of importance which is published from Washington." Moving the publication to D.C., he added, didn't seem to have changed or improved *New Republic*, "apart, obviously, from the convenience of publishing the magazine in the city where you reside." By return mail, Straight offered *U.S. News* as an example of a political magazine published in the capital. Besides, he explained, he had moved to D.C. because that's where he thought the center was, not vice versa.

Clearly, the magazines were separated conceptually as well as geographically, but nevertheless on December 8 Straight set forth "the basic conditions under which I would undertake the merger of the *New Republic* and *The Nation*":

> 1) The merger should reduce the deficits of the respective magazines;
>
> 2) There should be only one office and that should be in D.C.;
>
> 3) The new publisher should decide how much promotion via the mails is justifiable (based on mailing list availabilities, projections, etc.);
>
> 4) Assuming both magazines entered the merger debt-free except for the $120,000–$150,000 in unfulfilled subscriptions (a non-recurring deficit) it would be their joint responsibility to cover future deficits (nor could they draw on the $150,000 annual debenture interest previously available to *New Republic*);
>
> 5) I have assumed that Freda would write a weekly signed editorial and I would write an unsigned editorial. I suppose that in articles some form of veto power would have to be established. (For example, while our editorials in the issue of December 8 were very much the same, I could not conscientiously publish the article appearing in *The Nation* by Claude Bourdet.)*

The differences between the parties were not easily bridged, and once again the project appeared stalled, when a letter arrived from across the seas. Enter Kingsley Martin, the editor of the English weekly *The New Statesman*, which itself had merged with an English magazine also called *The Nation*. In a "confidential" letter to Kirchwey dated December 18, 1952, he said he was "not allowed to mention names" but "you can take it that I am not basing myself on rumour":

> You don't need telling that Michael Straight has been spending fantastic sums of money on the *N.R.* What you may not know is that it is not going to be possible for him to continue to spend more, and that the paper is therefore privately "on the market." . . . I recall that the *Statesman* and the *Nation* both ran at a loss until they amalgamated, and it seems silly to suggest that the U.S. cannot support, without loss, one such newspaper.
>
> . . . I think if you have a proposal of amalgamation, you may assume without question that Michael himself will not be an obstacle. I do not think he will continue on the paper in any case. . . . I should be the appropriate post office for you to use if you have any comments or proposals to make.

Kirchwey cabled Martin, "Most grateful. Accept suggestions. Airmailing terms." She followed with a long letter detailing the elaborate on and off "months of intensive work" and the "blank wall" they had come up against in the form of the $150,000 a year *New Republic* received from a trust fund, which she believed would be cut off in the event that *New Republic* was transformed into *The Nation and New Republic*, the proposed title of the merged magazine.

Kirchwey also wondered "whether there is an understandable reluctance on Mike's part to give up an institution founded by his father and in which there is a great deal of personal identification" or whether he harbored "subconscious resentment that we, who have never had any funds except those we could raise through circulation, advertising and gifts, have managed to survive, to increase our reputation." Straight's current and conscious memory is that "the merger discussions were a detail in trying to work out the *New Republic*'s financial problems, and we just couldn't make it work."

On January 7, 1953, Martin replied, "I am authorized to inform you that he has absolutely no legal power to attach any conditions or strings if you make an offer to buy the paper. I doubt if you now have any competitor in the field in spite of the rumors. You can be as tough as you like in bargaining without fear of losing the deal providing the financial offer is considered reasonable."

On January 15 Kirchwey wrote to Straight that she had heard he was interested in selling, and she set forth what she called "an alternative proposal" to the five-point merger plan—namely, that *The Nation* would 1) pay $35,000 for the assets of *New Republic* ($20,000 in cash and $15,000 in ten annual installments); 2) fulfill unexpired subscriptions; and 3) call the new publication *The Nation and New Republic*. Straight replied on January 16, 1953:

> Dear Freda:
>
> Thanks for your letter of January 15. I don't know where you hear these rumors but I will be grateful if you will discourage them and not give them any further currency. Since there is no basis to them I will not comment in detail on your proposal.
>
> My very best regards,
> Sincerely yours,
> Michael Straight

End of round two, but with a coda coming on May 8, 1953:

> Dear Freda:
>
> I obtained permission a while ago to let you know rather more fully what happened. . . . I was told specifically by others who had lost money in the *N.R.* that the usual source of money was at an end, that M. would be compelled to accept a fair business offer, and that it was believed no other offer was in the wind. I later learned that he found another source of money, as you know, and without members of the family knowing, and was horrified at the very idea of any amalgamation with the *Nation* on the ground that Carey McWilliams's position on the paper meant

*This was Bourdet's "Letter to America," which appeared in the December 6, 1952 *Nation*.

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that it must definitely be accounted part of the Communist front! Naturally this was told to me in confidence and it is not to be passed on. I felt you should know and that it was only fair you should understand what the obstacle proved to be. (Or was it only the excuse?)

Ever,
Kingsley

Well, the rebel-radical Carey McWilliams was, as anyone who knew him knows, neither a Communist nor a Communist front. Straight today says he harbored no ill will against McWilliams, "although I may have looked up some files." Kingsley Martin's source turned out to be Michael Straight's brother, Whitney, who resented the fact that as the elder brother he hadn't been granted control of the family trust. Michael, without telling the family until the deal was done, arranged to sell the magazine to Gil Harrison, his old friend from the American Veterans Committee (where he had fought against what he regarded as a Communist takeover attempt), and Harrison's new wife, Nancy Blaine, heiress to the Chicago fortune of Anita McCormick Blaine. Harrison became publisher; he became editor as well when Straight stepped down in 1956. *The Nation* reorganized as a limited partnership; using Nation Associates as a nonprofit fundraising vehicle, it hunkered down to fight its anti-cold war battles.

Looking back, it is now apparent that although *The Nation* and *The New Republic* may have shared the "same" politics in the late 1940s and the very beginning of the 1950s, they were not all that much the same. As late as 1949 Arthur Schlesinger Jr. could write in *The Vital Center* that *The Nation* and *New Republic* were journals of "the type of the progressive today . . . the fellow traveler of the fellow traveler." Yet *The Nation* was calling NATO "a new declaration of cold war" and saw the Atlantic Pact as a vote of no confidence in the United Nations, whereas *New Republic* was becoming an enthusiast of Harry Truman's foreign policy. Both were, of course, foes of McCarthyism; but where *The Nation* sounded a piercing alarm, Michael Straight, who in 1983 surfaced as the ex-Communist who fingered Anthony Blunt as the "fourth man" in the Burgess-MacLean-Philby spy scandal, was more sanguine. "I know of no citizen branded traitor today because, yesterday, he practiced Americanism," he wrote in *The New Republic* in 1954.

Today, the two magazines have new owners and editors and have long since traveled down different roads. In the 1960s *The New Republic* had a more benign view of the Kennedys than did *The Nation*, and although both magazines got advance word of plans for the Bay of Pigs invasion, *The Nation* broke the story, while *The New Republic* withheld it in deference to the wishes of the White House. By 1982, when *The Nation* denounced and *The New Republic* defended Israel's invasion of Lebanon, the idea that these old friends still shared a political project was no longer tenable. Commentators may differ about how far *The New Republic* has moved to the right or whether *The Nation* has become reflexively left. They may argue about whether the Washington-based *New Republic* is too close to power to see it or the New York–based *Nation* is too far from power to understand it. But at a time when independent voices, not to mention dissenting, iconoclastic and minority views, are few and fewer, perhaps there is one thing on which the editors, writers, staffs, owners and readers of these two relics from the print age might agree—how fortunate we all are that the merger that didn't happen didn't happen. □

A Most Righteous Prayer

RANDALL KENAN

FEVER. *By John Edgar Wideman. Henry Holt. 161 pp. $16.95.*

"Do not look for straightforward, linear steps from book to book," wrote John Edgar Wideman in the 1985 preface to his Homewood Trilogy. "Think rather of circles within circles within circles, a stone dropped into a still pool, ripples and wavemotions." In *Fever*, Wideman has troubled the water again, refining his already elliptical and dense prose; in the process he has reinvented black English and (re)made it, elegant, suave, as elastic as ever: "Ball be swishing with that good backspin, that good arch bringing it back, blip, blip, blip, three bounces and it's coming right back to Doc's hands like he got a string on the pill," he writes in "Doc's Story," a story about stories, a nigh-fantastical tale of a blind man and the man who inexplicably watches him and ponders over lost love.

Wideman began evolving the style evidenced in these stories in his Homewood Trilogy, most markedly in the 1983 PEN/Faulkner award–winning *Sent for You Yesterday* and further still in 1987's *Reuben*. It is his own patented stream of consciousness, sliding easily through tense and point of view; and, when it works, its power has the force of the most righteous prayer. It is as if he wrote his stories and then compressed them to a third of their original size. Eschewing quotation marks, Wideman has his speakers shift and shift and at times meld—as if into one mind, one voice.

The word haunting best describes the result. In each story some dim memory, some deep urge, some knowledge, some inescapable prophecy reaches through time or space. Voices whisper across voids; calls float over oceans.

These voices he often finds—like a child picking up pebbles on the beach—in fragments of history, news items, his own novels, even Bobby Short! Valaida Snow, the legendary trumpeter of the Jazz Era to whom the Queen of Denmark gave a golden trumpet, supplies perhaps the most chilling voice in "Valaida." "Tell him," she speaks from the grave, "they loved me at home too, a down-home girl from Chattanooga, Tennessee, who turned out the Apollo, not a mumbling word from wino heaven till they were on their feet hollering and clapping for more with the rest of the audience. . . . Yesteryears, yesterhours." But the story turns into a What If: What if Valaida Snow, who was interned in a Nazi concentration camp for over a year, what if she had saved the life of a 13-year-old boy who would become a survivor? Cut then within the same story to an old man disgusted and indifferent toward life trying to tell the remarkable tale of how he had one day been saved by a "colored woman" to his equally disgusted and indifferent black cleaning woman who "has put on flesh for protection. To soften blows. To ease around corners." The ironies do not merely abound, they cluster, almost fester—he, a Jew, tells her, a black woman, the story on Christmas Eve.

For irony is the tool Wideman is forever honing, sharpening, working with

Randall Kenan is the author of A Visitation of Spirits *(Grove).*

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surgical precision. "Hostages," the story of a woman whose husband is a captive of Arab terrorists, becomes an unraveling, a debunking of the concept of "prisoner." Suddenly everything is to be viewed in a new light—marriage, sickness, materialism—and to be seen as imprisoning. An immigrant in a new land; to be black in America; to be a child in the care of parents: Mostly trouble haunts these characters, trouble as in tension between black and white, Arab and Jew, men and women. Wideman manages to transmute that trouble into some of his most challenging and powerful prose yet, in which everything is subject to ridicule or doubt.

Even his own fiction is fair game, as in "Surfiction," where he takes on his own opaque, relentless, spiderwebby prose. It is a parody that is oddly more than a parody, a question within a question, a sly illumination—or is it yet more nasty tricks on the ever-gullible, at times contemptible, reader? He ponders: "Without authors whose last names begin with B, surfiction might not exist. B for Beckett, Barth, Burroughs, Barthes, Borges, Brautigan, Barthelme." But even in his high-minded meta-play, amid the (de)analysis of fragments of Charles Chestnutt and his own journal, we get a nugget of the old tensions and ironies, for ultimately in this quagmire of twisted logic he slips in a story as old-fashioned as Gilgamesh, about a couple fighting over a diary.

And though it may seem like wordplay, "Surfiction" offers insights into some of Wideman's less opaque motives:

> All goes swimmingly until a voice from the watermelon patch intrudes. . . . Recall your own reflection in the fun house mirror and the moment of doubt when you turn away and it turns away and you lose sight of it and it naturally enough loses sight of you and you wonder where it's going and where you're going in the wrinkling reflecting plate still laughing behind your back at someone.

Time and Space. Like present-day cosmologists, Wideman seems to have in mind not merely a blurring of the two concepts but their elimination. He metajokes about our Western cultural bias toward "clock time, calendar time," to time "acting on us rather than through us" and "that tames space by manmade structures and with the *I* as center defines other people and other things by nature of their relationship to *I* rather than by the independent integrity of the order they may represent." Wideman's true mission appears to be to replace the *I* at the center of all his stories, to make it subject to an internal order of things rather than to external structures and limitations. Unlike Ishmael Reed, his humor does not slice to the bone to the truth; Wideman's humor is sparse if not (at times) nonexistent. And unlike Amiri Baraka, his rage is far from militant; it is sublimated, almost repressed.

Nowhere in this collection is this more evident than in the title story. More a meditation than an eyewitness account, "Fever" centers around Philadelphia's yellow fever epidemic of the late eighteenth century. Snatching up bits and pieces of history here and there, he brilliantly creates an organism, like a New Age psychic channeler, that transports the sufferers from the 1700s to the present, and takes us back in time as well. Its scenes bring to mind images from Herzog's *Nosferatu* of a plague-ridden town debilitated, full of coffins, corpses, rats and decay: "A large woman, bloated into an even more cumbersome package by gases and liquids seething inside her body, had slipped from his grasp. . . . Catching against a rail, her body had slammed down and burst, spraying Wilcox like a fountain." Yet without warning the story shifts to the present, to the aftermath of the 1985 MOVE massacre, to the voice of a black hospital orderly. It is as if Wideman is again playing games with us, forcing us to see the past and the present as one; how we are affected by what has gone before, not only in our thinking but in our acting and in our soul-deep believing. Science (knowledge) becomes a metaphor for understanding hate; disease, a euphemism for the plague visited upon the wrongs of the unholy.

And the voices. Wideman leads us to believe the main character of "Fever" to be none other than Richard Allen, who founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church. His voice, initially eighteenth-century and pious, merges with a chorus of victims, singing of guilt, of racism, of ignorance. Ultimately the voices question Allen—a freedman—for staying in Philadelphia, abandoning his wife and children, risking his life by working with the virus-infected, practically enslaving himself to strange, clueless physicians. And Allen can articulate no reason for staying to combat the "unpleasantness from Egypt."

Not all of these stories sing as clearly. "The Statue of Liberty" seems particularly peculiar, a gratuitous walk on the prurient side, whose only purpose seems

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to be to shock for shock's sake. "Presents," though powerful in spots, slips too close to cliché for comfort. Based on a song by rhythm and blues holy man Solomon Burke, it is a grandmother's prophecy of a child's rise to fame and fortune through music and his eventual, inevitable decline; an all-too-familiar story with no new insights. "The Tambourine Lady," a light/dark-hearted play on the children's ditty "Step on a crack/break your mama's back," amuses but does not linger. "Rock River," on the other hand, returns once again to the conceit of the voice of the dead reaching back, this time after a husband's suicide while his best friend attempts to console the stolid widow. In the end pleasant, life-affirming memories overtake us, but leave us with more questions than resolutions.

More successful is "Little Brother," a biography of a dog in the form of a conversation between two old characters from Homewood, Geraldine and Penny, a discourse that encompasses the here and the gone, man and animal alike. In "Concert" a jazzman's meditations on his mother's death become an elegant musical riff. And "When It's Time to Go" calls up once again the all-too-easy symbol of blindness, but this time Wideman lets loose the language like a snake in a cage of rats: "Light was just singing to me, Mama, telling me I didn't need no eyes. Wasn't no such thing as eyes less you call your knees and hands and shoulders eyes cause everything you got can hear the light, or touch it and everything you got is something to see with." This tale of a blind boy whose witch mother cannot save him is also a thrice-told tale, but the language, the concentration, the shifting viewpoints, lift it above the mere or the hackneyed, transforming it into a story full of the incantatory power of a Zora Neale Hurston or a Virginia Woolf; a haunting yarn of magic and ways of being in the world.

Perhaps that is what these voices are speaking of: Ways of being in the world. Wideman wants us to see with our ears, to hear with our eyes, to smell with our hearts, to learn with our guts. Stop relying on "time" and "place," he says. Recognize that we are all "I." Wideman's characters all want something, desperately, something they cannot have, something inarticulable and inconceivable. This is the vision, that of a cruel world peopled by victims who go on and on unrequited, unavenged, unloved, that fuels *Fever*. A theme recurs in these stories: the mythic, Talmudic Lamed-Vov: "The Thirty Just Men set apart to suffer the reality humankind cannot bear? Saviors"; "God's hostages"; "Lamed-Vov are sponges drawing mankind's suffering into themselves"; "A thousand years is not long enough to thaw the agony each Lamed-Vov endures." Wideman sees us all as Lamed-Vov—which accounts for these ever-present, insistent, wailing voices, rippling out through time. □

ARCHITECTURE.

JANE HOLTZ KAY

If the 1980s—with their promotion of the superscale and their destruction of the human scale, with their pride of Trump (Donald) and their surfeit of Johnson (Philip), with their endorsement of privacy and their dissolution of community—were to have an architectural signature, it would be the emergence of "signature architecture."

Signature architecture was a mediagenic, mesomorphic form of design. It was a product in which cosmetics mattered most and design's first order was style and surface. It was architecture for *The Art of the Deal*. Developers, glowing in the bonfire of their own vanities, sought architecture as a selling tool. Architects-for-hire became more concerned about making a statement than planning a city.

Looking back from the cusp of the 1990s it is clear that style reigned and the star system dominated. As architects became celebrities, Michael Graves designed teapots and shoes. Social concerns—from saving energy to serving broader human needs—were as remote as the Woodstock Nation.

What can you make of a decade that went atwitter about a Chippendale top on a building (A.T.&T.'s) or whose prime patron was a pizza king (Thomas Monaghan of Domino's) who alternated between bolstering architects and undermining abortion clinics? It was a two-tier society, one architect told me: those who bought their homes before 1980 and those who didn't. The split went deeper. It was an age in which the homeless went without shelter while the house-entitled adorned their architecture with a bric-a-brac of excess. Consider the following as symbols (or as semiotic notations, in 1980s lingo):

§ the white corporate palace designed for General Foods in Rye, New York, a vulgar dinosaur so eerie that it might have housed the Evil Empire;

§ the pharaonic swimming pool by Robert A.M. Stern in a New Jersey mansion;

§ the wraparound marble chambers from coast to coast—Trump Tower by Der Scutt is a conspicuous example—in an imperial style that looks like the forecourt where Julius Caesar was stabbed. Is it any wonder that a royalist, Prince Charles, became the populist of the 1980s in denouncing architecture's excess of commercial display?

Like everything else in Reagan's America, less was no longer more. Only more was more, and postmodernism was its name. The big bland box of modernism that assaulted the landscape wasn't reduced; it was simply covered with a candy-box muchness. There was, as Mae West put it, no such thing as too much of a good thing. You want classical? We'll give you classical. Palladian windows on ground-hugging mansions. Columns on cumbersome high-rises. You want ornament? We'll give you Steven Spielberg Egyptoid—sconces, pilasters and like debris out of central casting. Again: What kind of egotist could unblushingly shape a megalithic design to shadow Central Park?

A designer I know calls all this "séance architecture." By that she means copycat buildings that invoke the ghosts of the past. Buildings or places like Charles Moore's Piazza d'Italia in New Orleans, one of the best of the breed, replicate the bit parts of the past with some style. Most simply shoot their motifs full of steroids. Graves's addition to the Whitney or Philip Johnson's International Place in Boston inflate the form on their facades and diminish the true style, meaning and context of the buildings beside them. Given a real golden oldie—the Guggenheim, for instance, or Louis Kahn's Fort Worth museum—architects and the so-called cultural institutions that hired them tampered willy-nilly with the architectural past while giving it lip service. Ahistorical America could only relate to bygone buildings as cover-up or irony.

"A society based on hope originates," architect Stanley Tigerman put it. "A society based on despair reiterates." When a talented designer like Kevin Roche felt compelled to replicate the work of nineteenth-century architect Cass Gilbert for his addition to New York's Jewish Museum, it was indeed time to wonder about the aesthetics of our age.

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Deconstructivism was the trendy embodiment of that response. The antithesis of architecture, which is construction, deconstructivism was helter-skelter design. Its buildings emphasize the random, like tilted pickup sticks. For all the liveliness of Frank Gehry's own house or the work of his followers, the buildings were symbolic of a society so despairing as the decade ended that it wanted to make the very walls come down. Perhaps this design, which deliberately disowns a context, is the only answer to postmodernism's hypocritical and overblown parody of the supposed context of the past.

With Reagan king and giganticism and privatism as his courtiers, it was no shock that the decade gave us such let-them-eat-cake words as "Wintergarden" to describe the vast interior space at Battery Park. Or that moviemakers, ever on the alert to the future, chose the vast and surreal spaces of architect Ricardo Bofill's Paris apartments to film as the fearsome tomorrowland of *Brazil*. And what better portent of a Brave New World to come in the 1990s than Philip Johnson's new design for Times Square? Picture the proposed behemoth of neon-encrusted buildings all aglow in the snowy night air while the homeless huddle far below at ground level, turning the streets into a Dickensian Christmas and Franklin Roosevelt's vision to end the plight of the "ill-housed, ill-clad and ill-nourished" into the dream of a simpleton.

And yet, this was a decade that did, in fact, do some things right. It did defeat the Central Park monstrosity and some of its counterparts across the nation. It did say "up with the old," reviving historic structures from New England's mills to Washington's and Cincinnati's rail stations. To be sure, every positive moment of the decade (the gutsy, industrial-age dynamism of Lloyd's London headquarters building by Richard Rogers; the splashy delight of the United Airlines terminal in Chicago by Helmut Jahn) had a fleet of opposites. (Norman Foster's Hong Kong bank, the ultimate exercise in gargantuanism, is a building so large that it requires a separate warehouse to hold the parts that might need replacing.) Yet, in the end, this profiteering period was not deaf to the major environmental and planning issues of the last decade of the twentieth century.

Above all, on the broadest environmental scale, we have recognized our responsibility for the fate of the globe; we know that the endurance of the planet depends on what we do to its landscape. We have said goodbye to the innocence of leaf-burning; bid adieu to the carefree romance of the carbon dioxide–spewing car ride to the despoiling suburbs. We know there are environmental truths and consequences. If the 1960s and 1970s were the age of entitlement, the 1980s have ended with a sense of endangerment.

Our architects may have ancestors on the brain and our citizens may be awash in nostalgia, but the throwaway generation that sloughed off our streets and cities is rethinking that posture. Even as America moved by wheel into exurbia, even as the architecture of the freeway despoiled the landscape, even as the mall spread anomie and privatism, a new/old urbanism took hold. The radicalism of architect Robert Venturi's statement that "Main Street is almost all right" has become a convention. From Burlington, Vermont, the countercultural capital of America, to upscale Tiburon, California, to Highland Park, Illinois, Main Street has been revived. When even Irvine, California, that epitome of the Corbusian city of isolated high-rises wrapped by roads, solicits a main street, the times they are a-changing.

Automania notwithstanding, this new urbanism is heartening. Public places are reappearing. Throughout the country, parks and public plazas have been refurbished. New public spaces proposed or built in Boston, Philadelphia, Beverly Hills, Washington, D.C., and Portland, Oregon, testify to a reversal of what Richard Sennett called "the fall of public man." For all their contradictions—consumerist frenzy mixed with bag-lady poverty—the inclusion of public man, woman and child in shared spaces such as waterfronts and "festival markets" is a hopeful sign. The teddy bear may be the mascot for such places, but they token a new urbanism and, one hopes, a new sense of community.

As the decade ends, our hyperventilating aerobic age has hardly restored walking to its rightful place at the center of the planning universe, but its most publicized new town, Seaside, is a Florida panhandle village that has leashed the car and dictated a design based on human scale. Elsewhere the gridlock that has stemmed from our diffuse way of building has inspired parallel planning concerns, causing places like Chicago to upgrade mass transit and Los Angeles, the queen of the car cities, to curb the car.

All this was perhaps presaged in the 1980s. If life imitates comedy, the Blues Brothers were onto something in 1980 when they wasted a suburban mall, smashing in and out of stores in a classic car chase. Architect/sculptor James Wines also had more than tongue in cheek when he designed crumbling walls for mall showrooms across the country. It was a humpty-dumpty decade when such walls did come down, and the period had philosopher-architects to say so. The 1990s face the Armageddon they predicted, but at least the vision is there. □

FILM.

STUART KLAWANS

Born on the Fourth of July
Focus on Raul Ruiz
Holiday Celluloid Wrap-up
Roger and Me, Round II

Most movies never reach an emotional simmer; a rare few boil over. And then there's *Born on the Fourth of July*, which shoots off the screen like pressurized steam. Directed with furious, relentless energy by Oliver Stone, the film keeps hitting moments that feel like climaxes and then pushes them further. Stone doesn't seem to think that it's enough to strand a pair of Vietnam veterans in the Mexican desert, as if they were Vladimir and Estragon in fatigues and wheelchairs. Whereas other directors might cut on that image, Stone has to go on, making the vets get into a fight over primacy in being damned. (The prize goes to the one who killed more babies.) And still the scene won't end. In case the audience should be insufficiently appalled, Stone doesn't quit until the vets have knocked each other out of their wheelchairs and lie sprawled in the sand.

It's about time, too. *Born on the Fourth of July* has the urgency of a truth told—or screamed—against a deafening Muzak of lies. Based on the memoir of the same name by Ron Kovic (who collaborated on the screenplay), the film wants to shout down the sentimentalization of the Vietnam War, the sweet-talk about national healing, most of all the current pieties about the war's veterans. This is perhaps the first I-was-there picture (including Stone's own *Platoon*) to vent full-blast the self-doubt and self-pity and justifiable rage so many veterans have felt.

In outline, its story is simple. Kovic came from a working-class Catholic family on Long Island, enlisted in the Marines and served two tours in Vietnam.

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Wounded in battle, he returned home in a wheelchair, paralyzed from the chest down but still convinced he had done his duty, still certain that anybody who opposed the war should move to Russia. Then he started to think. He despaired; he drank; after a long, messy period, he turned to literature and activism. His memoir won him respect as a writer; his work with Vietnam Veterans Against the War made him a public figure.

But this is like summarizing *Il Trovatore* by calling it a story about mistaken identity. What makes *Born on the Fourth of July* so remarkable is the way it inflates Kovic's testimony to epic proportions. For the price of your ticket, you get a grand-scale re-creation of American life, 1956-76; a psychohistory of the Vietnam War; a drama about Everyvet. The action stays tightly focused on Kovic (portrayed by Tom Cruise with more grit and self-abandon than I'd thought him capable of). The focus is so tight, in fact, that some of the close-ups threaten to burst the frame. The camera generally stays right on the surface of Cruise's eyes or else substitutes for them; with Stone's nonstop dollies and pans and tilts, you might come out of the theater feeling as if you had been fighting battles personally, rolling around drunkenly in a wheelchair and getting hit on the head by cops. And yet, for all the hyperkinetic, subjective camera movement, the unrelenting focus on one character, the film probably tells you more about American society and politics than all previous Vietnam movies combined, with *Easy Rider* thrown in for good measure.

In particular, it dramatizes Kovic's notion that he received a military education just by living in Massapequa. The first time we see this all-American boy, in a sequence that looks unnervingly like a conventional war movie, he is 10 years old and playing soldier with his friends. "We couldn't wait to be men," Cruise says on the soundtrack. And then we see what a man's upbringing entailed: admiring the veterans in Independence Day parades, listening raptly to John Kennedy talk of sacrifice, attending to the bloodthirsty rantings of the high-school wrestling coach. It also meant a fear of women. In a remarkable extended sequence, with a 1960s *mise en scène* so thickly layered that the actors almost have to wade through the period detail, we see Kovic fumble his chance for a date, all because he's so caught up in getting out of Long Island and into the Marines. He quakes at asking his sweetheart to the prom, as if she were the very incarnation of those impure thoughts he's been warned against. The best he can do is talk modestly about the job he's got to do in Vietnam, hoping she'll be impressed. Then, in his final moral conflict before leaving for boot camp, he gets down on his knees on prom night and prays to know whether he's done the right thing. Should he dance with a girl or go to Asia and fight Communism?

It's possible to see the rest of the film as the story of how Kovic realized he'd made the wrong choice and then learned to live with the consequences. I could go into detail; but rather than regale you with the rest of the eighteen pages of notes I scribbled so frantically in the dark, let me just encourage you to go. The film is long, overbearing, brutal and indispensable. It gives you more of one man's reality than you can easily handle, combined with more political honesty than anyone could expect from Hollywood. Just how far does it go to get things right? Put it this way: In the big campus demonstration scene, the main

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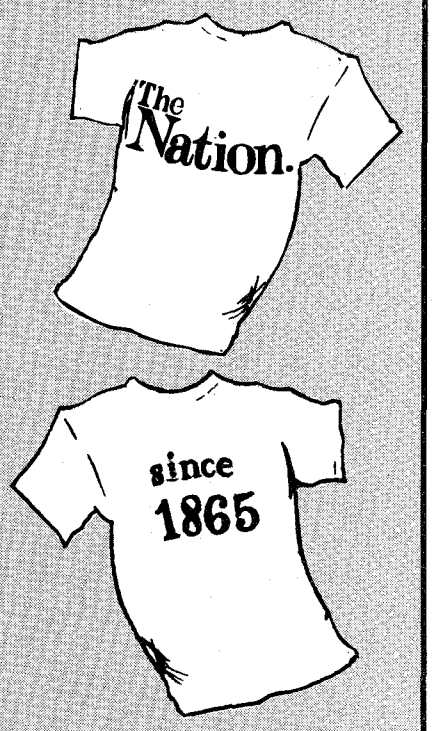

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speaker is Abbie Hoffman. May the dear man rest in peace—he finally made it into that major motion picture.

"Don't worry," a colleague said, as I sat down for my first Raul Ruiz experience. "His movies are all different. So if you don't like this one, you can always wait and see if the next one suits you better."

I had just confessed to a complete ignorance of the work of this Paris-based Chilean exile, the widely admired perpetrator of at least sixty cinematic whatsits. Since the International Film Circuit is distributing a package of his films (now on view in New York at the Public Theater), the time had come for catching up. I had my first experience, and I liked it enough to say, with the enthusiasm of a recent convert, that you, too, should take the plunge. You can't be sure of what you'll get from film to film—or, for that matter, from frame to frame—but whatever hits the screen is likely to make your jaw drop and your mind start racing.

Imagine a very free adaptation of Kafka's "In the Penal Colony," shot as a Third World documentary with suitably poverty-level photography and sound. Imagine a story from some cheap photonovel, complete with murders and dismemberment and a sex-change operation, with the whole drama continually interrupted—and sometimes even enacted—by a poundful of yapping dogs. Imagine a state-commissioned documentary about the 1978 elections in France, filmed (as the narrator explains) so that "what we shoot looks like what other people would throw away." Imagine—But I have no way to explain the fourth film I saw, *The Suspended Vocation*, without several pages of description, followed by a lengthy argument about which fellow exile to compare the filmmaker with, Nabokov or Joyce. (Ruiz's use of formal artifice recalls the former; he resembles the latter in his talent for parody, his antic humor, his enjoyment of the cheapest cultural debris.)

But the only quality common to all the films I saw—a small sample, admittedly—was a profound disobedience. The modernist's aversion to being confined to one style seems to have fused in Ruiz with the Third World intellectual's uneasiness at being defined by others. This attitude comes out most aggressively in his film on the French elections, *Of Great Events and Ordinary People*, a report that refuses to report anything, a documentary that exposes only the methods of documentary. There's some fun to be had in imagining people's faces at the first screening—in effect, the funders had asked Ruiz for the time of day, and he responded by handing them, gear by gear, the works of an old alarm clock. But unless you, too, have a personal grudge against film bureaucrats, you will probably get more entertainment from another of Ruiz's acts of disobedience, the wildly, bitterly funny *The Penal Colony*. Here, Ruiz reinvents Latin America as the island of Captiva, where the inhabitants proudly insist on their distinct cultural identity—which means, in this case, living like their convict ancestors. The currency of Captiva is cigarettes, the native costumes are a jumble of old uniforms, and the citizens—apparently all male—tend to crowd together in tiny rooms. "So childlike," coos a visiting journalist, ensconced in the Hotel Turismo.

As for *The Suspended Vocation*—No, really, I couldn't possibly explain. Perhaps some other critic—let's call him Josef K—might tell you it's about the Catholic Church, the Chilean left, various schools of film theory, the battle between matriarchy and patriarchy and lots more, too, which the present writer didn't get, given the way reality kept melting. I myself would call *The Suspended Vocation* the ultimate in paranoid cinema: The protagonist (protagonists?) must submit to the unknowable will of a constantly changing political organization, while the viewer, in much the same way, must submit to the whims of Ruiz. On one thing, though, both Josef K and I agree. This was the most fun we've ever had while being driven insane.

Focus on Raul Ruiz will be on view in New York through December 21—hurry, if you're there—and then will travel to various cities during 1990.

Here is a brief guide for politically correct and aesthetically satisfying holiday viewing. I offer it in the spirit of a young man a few rows in front of me at *Back to the Future II*, who rose at the conclusion with the best one-line commentary I've heard on that picture: "I better get my money back."

After the disaster of *Betrayed*, Costa-Gavras and screenwriter Joe Eszterhas have bounced back nicely with *Music Box*, a worthy courtroom drama about a suspected war criminal. Jessica Lange gives the sort of performance we've come to take for granted from her but shouldn't, starring as a Chicago-based lawyer who learns her father may be ex-

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tradited to Hungary for his collaboration with the Nazis. Of course she agrees to represent her father; of course he's guilty. The action has less to do with how he's exposed than with her growing sense of doubt and revulsion. Armin Mueller-Stahl, one of the icons of Central European cinema, plays the grandfatherly mass murderer.

Camille Claudel is the official French entry for the Academy Awards and as such puts the recently revived "tradition of quality" back into its grave. Director Bruno Nuytten has taken the utterly riveting story of this doomed sculptress and turned it into something that's as much fun as sitting in a closet for three hours, listening to your hair turn white. My favorite moments: Gerard Depardieu as Rodin, picking up a head of lettuce and murmuring to it that life is beautiful; and Isabelle Adjani as Claudel, solemnly telling her brother Paul, "It will be hard for you, being a Catholic, a diplomat and a poet—all at the same time!"

We're No Angels, directed by Neil Jordan from a screenplay by David Mamet, is a dark comedy (or perhaps a light drama) about two escaped convicts impersonating priests. The stars—Robert De Niro and Sean Penn—do more mugging than talking; after an effective opening with a prison-break sequence, the movie turns gooey at the core. Probably the most intriguing thing about the film is the unnatural conjunction of its writer with the main prop, a life-size piece of religious statuary. *We're No Angels* finally turns out to be *David Mamet Meets the Blessed Virgin Mary*.

The high point of *The War of the Roses* is the title sequence, directed by Elaine and Saul Bass. The camera peers and pokes through the folds of a snow-white fabric, at last revealing it to be a handkerchief. Then comes the first scene, in which the director of the rest of the film, Danny DeVito, puts the handkerchief to use, in effect smearing snot all over the audience—which is pretty much what he does for the following two hours as well. Starring Kathleen Turner and Michael Douglas as rich people fighting through a divorce, the film offers a spectacle of domestic brutality, as if that were a pleasure, then closes with a homily about fidelity and love. The screenplay is by Michael Leeson, based on a similarly grating novel by Warren Adler.

Michael Moore's *Roger and Me*, the movie America has been waiting for, opens at the end of December, bringing its tale of corporate rapacity and working-class pain to screens across the country, though not, as Moore notes, to Flint, Michigan, where it was shot. All the movie houses there have closed. Through a special arrangement with the film's distributor, Warner Brothers, *Roger and Me* will be shown as close to Flint as possible, at a multiplex three miles outside of town.

Given the rapturous welcome the film already has received at festivals (and also here in the October 30 issue), it's not surprising that some revisionist criticism has started to appear. You can't make a funny, angry, persuasive documentary about the depredations of capitalism and expect everyone just to smile.

The most recent focus of debate has been an article by Harlan Jacobson in the November/December issue of *Film Comment*, challenging Moore about how he selected and arranged the material in his film. Though I doubt Jacobson intended to harm either Moore or the movie, it's easy to see how other commentators might use the article as a weapon. Already, I've heard people speak with ill-disguised glee about how Moore has been "exposed."

So let me note that Moore has indeed given an accurate account of the trials of Flint with all the details fully explained in their proper order. He published it in *The Nation* of June 6, 1987. And yet, strangely enough, Warner Brothers did not beg him on that occasion for permission to bring Flint's story to the world. That had to wait for the film festival triumph of *Roger and Me*. My advice, then, is to ignore the phony controversy and see the movie twice. That way, you can catch the jokes you missed because of laughing so hard the first time. □

MUSIC NOTE.

New Music America

After a decade of traveling around the United States, New Music America returned to New York November 8-18 under the aegis of the Brooklyn Academy of Music. More than a hundred acts from all over the musical map were booked at twenty-odd venues (including BAM) scattered around the city.

With the artistic vanguard splintered, like society at large, into smaller-interest subgroups, the organizers this year included rock and Third World pop, jazz

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and minimalism, with music theater, performance art and silent-film accompaniment thrown in. They thus neatly sidestepped a theoretical conundrum—What *is* new music?—in favor of ear-opening juxtapositions. With so much to choose from and so little space, I'll just yank a few pearls from the festival's embarrassment of riches. Check 'em out when they land near you.

Electric-mechanical whiz Trimpin built a three-dimensional set of triggered instruments to play quirky environmental pieces by Conlon Nancarrow and himself—fascinating and often funny. California guitarist Paul Dresher and New York reedman Ned Rothenberg collaborated on "Opposites Attract," an interesting and evocative piece that mixed shakuhachi with electronics. Bobby Previte led an offbeat nine-piece lineup in a reading of his outstanding album, *Claude's Late Morning*, which swirls rock, country, French bistro and Afro-pop sounds into one idiosyncratic stew.

John Carter unveiled *Shadows on a Wall*, the fifth part of his brilliantly composed, arranged and executed series on the interaction of African and American cultures. Building from riffs to dense charts, using suggestions from his fine players, Carter's work extends the conceptual frame of Duke Ellington's best suites.

In some ways N.M.A. composer-in-residence Butch Morris carries Ellington's ideas even further. He develops with his musicians the elastic cueing body language he calls conduction, which lets him conjure on the spot anything from backing riffs behind a soloist to a sudden mood or theme shift. His supple musical idiom—his music was performed all week long—somehow combines motion and stasis without dividing into statement, development and recapitulation.

The art-rockers of Curlew teamed with singer Amy Denio to perform a cycle of songs as a setting for the oblique, witty poems of Paul Haines. From neopsychedelia to mutant country or blues, Curlew performed at its peak—which is phenomenally high. The Butthole Surfers, full of feedback and grunge, transformed BAM's Opera House stage, which once hosted Caruso, into a high-tech version of CBGB.

While salsa great Willie Colón and Zimbabwean legend Thomas Mapfumo performed outstandingly during the festival, the closing "Night of a Thousand Bands" also presented Third World pop. Ethiopian vocalist Aster Aweke keened microtonal melodies and ululations over roiling, fluid rhythms; Iranian singer Sussan Deihim's muscular pitch-bending soared above electronic backing. And bassist Israel "Cachao" Lopez, one of salsa's inventors, led Son Primero in relaxed dance-floor grooves that warped time and melody in endlessly wonderful ways.

Music theater and performance art were well represented. Tiye Giraud, a former Woman of the Calabash, continued the fascinating blend of storytelling and song from around the world she'd helped that group fashion. The Horseflies combined reggae, minimalism, country and rock for *The Gray Nineties*, a grim reminder of how we've mortgaged our future financially, environmentally, morally.

Combining deconstructionist writing with a Kafkaesque sensibility on a spare but effective set, Heiner Goebbels's *The Man in the Elevator* navigated a labyrinth of often simultaneous or overlapping verbal and musical languages. Negativland broadcast its mind-warping suburban *mise en scène*, tossing media fragments around like Firesign Theater.

And New Music America brought back the art of scoring silent movies. Best of the bill was the Clubfoot Orchestra's hilarious, well-wrought score for *Nosferatu*: What one wag dubbed "the vampire's vamp" cracked everybody up.

In a sense, New Music America is meant to be a kind of annual scouting of musical frontiers—and this year it brought back the goods. Also to its credit, it tried to present the music in spaces where artists and their regular audiences would feel at home while trying to infuse those venues with new and curious faces. That notion, borrowed directly from European festival organizing, worked even when the music didn't. Let's hope that next year's festival in Montreal does as well.

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W	O	R	M	S	■	A	B	A	N	D	O	N	E	D
P	■	E	■	P	■	L	■	T	■	M	■	S	■	D
O	V	E	R	S	H	O	O	T	■	I	N	T	H	E
R	■	F	■	■	■	T	■	E	■	N	■	■	■	N
T	W	O	B	I	T	S	■	R	O	T	A	T	E	S
■	■	L	■	C	■	■	■	■	■	O	■	R	■	■
L	A	D	D	E	R	S	■	S	E	N	S	A	T	E
O	■	■	■	L	■	U	■	N	■	■	■	N	■	S
N	O	R	M	A	■	B	L	U	E	N	O	S	E	S
G	■	O	■	N	■	S	■	F	■	O	■	L	■	E
R	O	U	N	D	S	O	F	F	■	B	R	A	I	N
U	■	S	■	E	■	I	■	E	■	L	■	T	■	E
N	A	T	U	R	A	L	■	D	E	E	P	E	N	S

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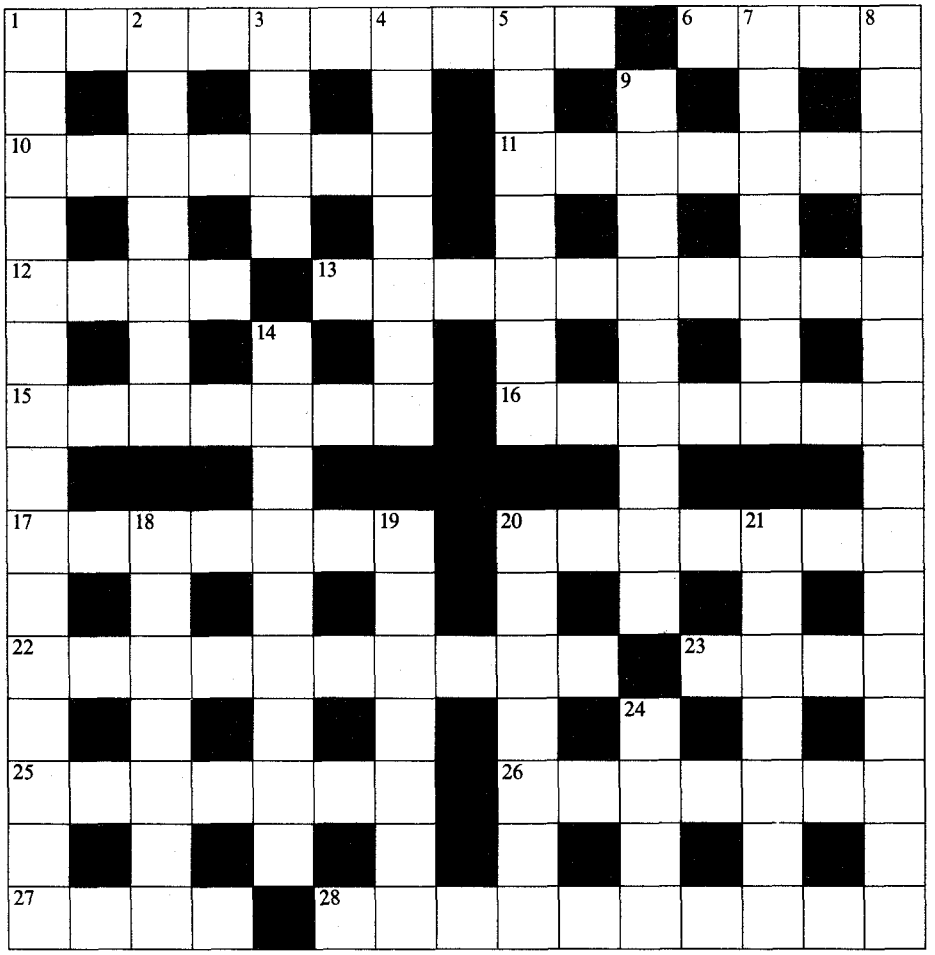
Crossword Puzzle No. 2271

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Powerful revolution of the East, caused by rulers there, perhaps. (10)
6 Not very colorful and obviously a backward poet. (4)
10 New in America, old in Europe, alternatively bends over.(7)
11 Counterchange for defeat? (7)
12 See 20
13 A good place for yawns, if it's late? (10)
15 Such things can't really be fixed. (7)
16 However, one like a clapper in the bell, or a firing pin in a gun, should still work! (7)
17 Saucy country? (7)
20 and 12 A violent change around border, according to the old song. (3,3,1,4)
22 Something like this should be a ball, but sounds base. (3-7)
23 True, it's a movie, but it might gum up the works! (4)
25 Sounds as though it made a comedown, but really acted like a king. (7)
26 Most owe something like this in change, with a pair. (7)
27 Born to a rather large number in want? (4)
28 They might manipulate you out of the pass, too! (10)

DOWN

1 Do they bring all their difficult homework for their parents to solve? (7,8)
2 Sort of late (five to four) in the city. (3,4)
3 Such old oxen should have been easy to keep clean! (Were their feet tidy?) (4)
4 Rather severe outbreak in our country, with a tree problem. (7)
5 They might be made in the ledger with small printing space given to certain attempts. (7)
7 Return in a hurry—it may be made after a good kick. (7)
8 Perhaps a loaf with such as limes and oranges. (Bounty associated with them?) (10,5)
9 Paradoxically beneficial sorrow, common with the character of Charles Schulz. (4,5)
14 An undergarment's in so disheveled a state, with worn areas. (9)
18 It's a wide lot, in a way, but water may be out now. (3,4)
19 Makes plain the little Christmastime poetry. ("The colds" with a cold?) (7)
20 Letters, letters! (One might go under the bridge.) (7)
21 Here's one way to put bubbles into the wine, but a departure from it is possible. (7)
24 Biddy might be here for a little joint economic activity. (4)

PUZZLED?

No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules," send for those of Mr. Lewis to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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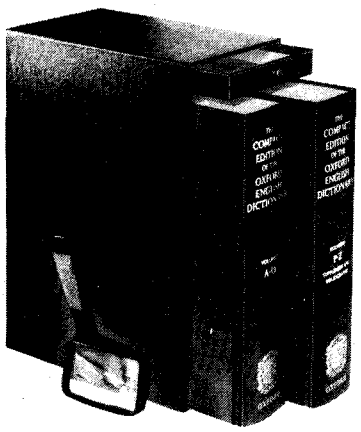

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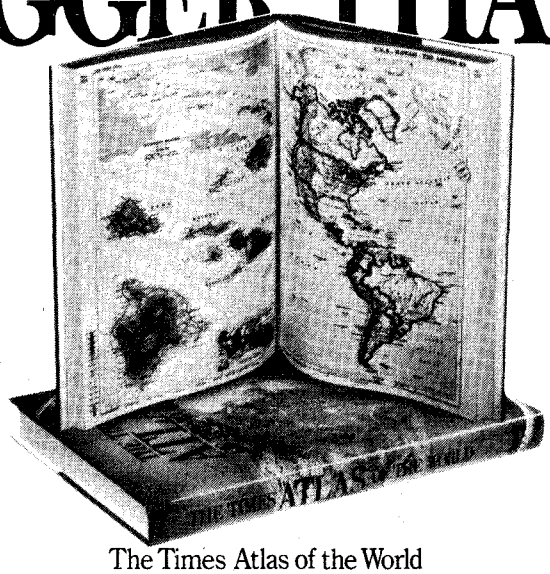

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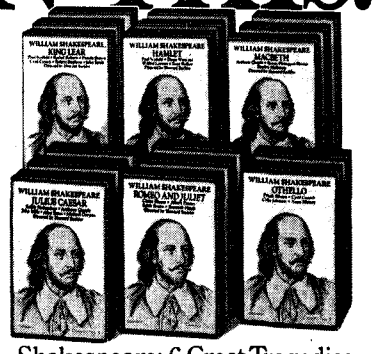

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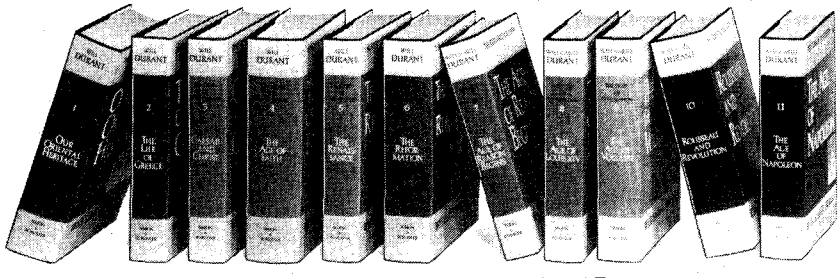

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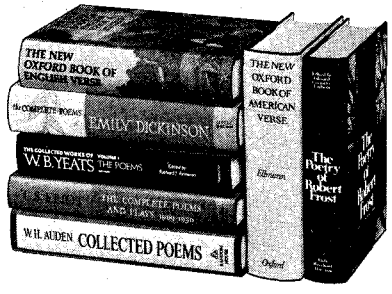
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